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PLUCK AND LUCK

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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Price 8 Cents

PADDLING ON THE AMAZON; OR, THREE BOY CANOEISTS IN SOUTH AMERICA.

By RICHARD R. MONTGOMERY.

AND OTHER
STORIES



A cry of horror goes up from Tom and Frank. They all see a lasso fall over Jack's head, and behold him jerked out of his canoe bodily and drawn through the water toward the canoe of the savages.

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PLUCK AND LUCK

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PADDLING ON THE AMAZON

OR, THREE BOY CANOEISTS IN SOUTH AMERICA

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CHAPTER I.—The Canoe Club.

"I wonder if we shall ever see him again?"

"Well, I certainly hope so, for he was a splendid fellow."

"Who is that you are talking about?"

Tom Blake and Frank Woodward were the first speakers, and the scene was the boat-house of the Junior New York Canoe Club. Jack Moreland had just entered in time to catch the commendatory remark Frank had made.

"Why we were speaking of Walter Kenmore," responded the latter.

"Poor fellow! I fear it's all up with him."

"It looks so—that's a fact," replied Frank.

"For it's eight months now, since a word was heard from him, and the Daily Transcript's agent has returned only to report 'No clew,'" added Tom Blake.

"Certainly one of three misfortunes must have befallen Walter. Either his canoe was wrecked, he was killed by savages, or carried away into captivity by some of the wild tribes of the great valley of the Amazon," stated Frank, positively.

The three lads whom we have introduced were all manly young fellows, ranging from eighteen to twenty years of age in one, two, three order, Tom Blake being the youngest—just eighteen—Frank nineteen, and Jack Moreland twenty. All three were members of the Junior New York Canoe Club, and Walter Kenmore had been their boon companion and best friend. Walter Kenmore was a leading member of the canoe club, and, like his three comrades above named, an enthusiastic canoeist. As a newspaper correspondent he had already made his mark, and at the time of which we are writing he was under engagement to the Daily Transcript, a great metropolitan newspaper.

As hinted, the proprietor of that enterprising journey had sent the young canoeist to South America in the interest of his paper. Walter had been instructed to start at the mouth of the Amazon and make a canoe voyage as far toward the source of the wonderful river as possible. The young correspondent had reached Para at the mouth of Amazon all right—that much was known. After remaining there some weeks, a

victim to the malign influences of South America fever, he had embarked in his canoe up the Amazon. From that day the young canoeist had become as one dead to the world—a missing man. From time to time the press throughout the country commented on the mystery of the Amazon, alluding to the disappearance of Walter Kenmore, and speaking in the highest terms of the spirit of enterprise and devotion which had caused the Daily Transcript to make such a long and expensive search for their lost canoe voyager.

But the lapse of time had now brought about in the public mind the same conclusion that Walter Kenmore's boy friends of the canoe club entertained, that the young newspaper correspondent would never be heard of again, that the mystery of the Amazon which held his untimely fate would remain a locked secret forever. It was now the 1st of June. The boating season had well opened, and on the day of which we are writing the three lads we have presented and nearly all the members of the canoe club were at the boathouse. All hands were looking over their canoes and seeing that they were in readiness for a cruise. Through the long window at the front of the building the waters of the Hudson could be seen, now enshrouded by the deepening shadows, and here and there a light flashed upon the somber tide, telling of the presence of some craft.

Suddenly there came a knock on the boathouse door. It was opened, and a letter-carrier entered, presenting a sealed package addressed to—Jack Moreland, Esq., care of the Junior New York Canoe Club, New York City, U. S. A. As the postman read the inscription on the package, Jack Moreland came forward eagerly and received it from his hand. No one paid any particular attention to him, for it was not unusual for the members of the club to have their mail sent to the boathouse, which, also, in the summer season, was the only headquarters of the canoeists. But suddenly everyone present was electrified by an exclamation from Jack.

"Great Scott! It's from South America!" cried Jack.

"From South America?" echoed a dozen voices.

While his comrades crowded around him, in eager and suspenseful interest, watching and

waiting for the denouncement, Jack opened the package. It was made up in a singular way. First, there was an outer covering of rough manila paper, bound about with heavy twine, and sealed and stamped. Inside that was a covering of matting, made of fine plaited grass of a yellow hue, completely woven about the package, and which evidently was the work of some time and wonderful skill. Jack had to use his knife to cut the matting, and then he found yet another cover to penetrate. It was made of the bleached skin of some animal, bound about with thongs of the same. At last the heart of the mysterious package was reached. It consisted of several leaves of a note-book, ragged at the top, as if hastily torn from the volume whence they came. Jack cast one glance at the handwriting which covered the paper, and recognizing it, dropped into a chair, exclaiming:

"Read it—read it," was the eager request Jack heard from all sides.

"Of course I will, if you fellows will only give me time to get my breath. I feel as if the surprise had just about knocked me silly," replied Jack.

Then he read the writing contained in the strange package. In breathless silence his youthful audience listened. The communication proved really to be a few pages of Walter Kenmore's diary. Across the top of the first page was scrawled the following note:

"I have not time to write. By an unexpected piece of good luck I am able to send the last few pages of my diary. So if I am never heard of again you may have some idea of my fate.—Walter."

Having read the above, Jack continued the reading of the pages of the lost canoeist's notebook as follows:

"Nov. 18th.—Yesterday landed with Mijar, the gaucho, at a village of friendly Indians, after days of paddling our canoes in the terrible heat, tormented almost to madness by countless insects. The way has lain between the most wonderful forests the eye of man ever beheld. We have seen strange people and animals. I would have returned to Para, to keep my pledge to Senor Avilleos, but it was not to be. My deadly foes are behind ready to cut me off if I turn back. Mijar, true and devoted to me through every peril, says our only chance for life is to go on, on— Can I believe his startling story that there is a waterway across the entire continent of South America through the Amazon and its tributaries? We shall see.

"Nov. 19th.—We have found this settlement to be a village of a Jesuit mission. There are about three hundred inhabitants, and the place is like a tropical garden. The mud houses are overgrown with greenery, every rock is mantled with vegetation. Strange trees, with great white trunks as smooth and round as the marble pillows of an eastern palace, give shade with their domes of purple leaves.

"The villagers have only one source of trouble—an occasional visit of a band of Indos misterios, as the old Spanish priest who has been here half a century calls them in his Spanish idiom—meaning mysterious Indians. He had no idea, however, whence they came or to what tribe they

belonged. From his description evidently they belong to a people entirely unknown to Europeans. We have been made welcome by the priest and well entertained. Shall rest here a few days longer.

"Nov. 20th.—The Indos misterios have come. They are wild and warlike looking fellows, naked to the waist, armed with bows, arrows and the longest spears I have yet seen. They came down the Amazon in great canoes carved and painted with wonderful skill, and they have just surrounded the mission. We have barricaded the structure and are preparing to fight for our lives.

"Nov. 21st.—I am a prisoner, and so is my faithful Mijar. We made a good fight, but the enemy was too strong for us. We are surprised that we were not slain upon the spot; but the cacique, or chief of the band, who wears a helmet made of the skull of a condor, and which, he tells me, signifies he is a great warrior, has spared us for some future fate which is yet a mystery. I am permitted to write. The wild Indos think I am a great medicine man, and do not like to interfere with my pencil and book, it seems.

"To my surprise, the cacique speaks indifferent Spanish, and I begin to see that he has Spanish blood in his veins, as I study his features. He has spared my life because the queen of his tribe has instructed him to bring the first white man he can capture to her unharmed. She has never seen a white man. Mijar will be put to death unless my intercession can save him.

"Nov. 22d.—The cacique has consented to spare Mijar and take him with her to the queen of the mysterious people on condition of my promise to make no attempt at escape during the journey to— Ah, that is the question. To all my questions as to the location of the home of his strange people, the cacique has only answered. 'Up the Amazon.'

"So I am going into the unknown. I most regret that I cannot keep my pledge to the Senor Avilleos of Para to return in ten days to be present at the trial. Heavens grant the noble young man may not meet his doom because of my absence. And my heart fails me when I think I may never meet the lovely Inez again."

Such was the message of the lost canoeist from the Amazon. A dead silence followed the conclusion of its reading by Jack Moreland. Tom Blake, brave, impulsive Tom, was the first to break the stillness, saying:

"Oh, if we only had the money, what a good and glorious thing it would be for our canoe club to find and rescue Walter!"

"Yes—yes," was the eager assent, and before more could be said there came another rap at the door of the boat-house." Immediately a man entered, at the sight of whom all the members of the canoe club were much surprised.

CHAPTER II.—Off For South America.

The gentleman who entered the headquarters of the canoe club had never been the guest of that organization before, and it is safe to say that no one present had ever expected that he would be. He was recognized as Colonel Pember-

ton Bugg, the owner of the Daily Universe, now the great newspaper rival of the Daily Transcript. But a year or so previously the Daily Universe had been almost on the verge of bankruptcy, incompetent, misdirected management, a lack of enterprise and general torpidity had brought the paper down until, among publishers, it was generally considered to be "on its last legs."

But just as the affairs of the Daily Universe were at about their lowest ebb, and the journal seemed destined to step out of the universe unheralded and unwept, Colonel Pemberton Bugg turned up and bought the whole concern at a low figure, though the wiseacres said he paid too much for it.

"I beg your pardon, young gentlemen all," said the colonel, bowing and giving a comprehensive wave of his hand. "But I just learned that you were in session here, and the information followed close upon the inception of an idea I have—I might say a bright idea, I think, even at the risk of incurring the charge of egotism. Nothing like striking while the iron's hot, or, at least, warm. Ha! ha! Well, the fact is, young gentlemen, I believe Walter Kenmore, the young canoeist and correspondent of my esteemed contemporary, The Transcript, is an honored member of your club. Am I right?"

"Yes, yes. Quite so."

"Very good. Before stating the object of my call I would ask it, as a personal favor, to one who has the welfare of your absent members at heart, that you, one and all, pledge yourselves to keep what I am about to say a profound secret."

There was a general assent.

"I feel that I can rely upon your word, and now to the point. Briefly, my idea is to send some of you to find Walter Kenmore in the interest of the Universe. The Transcript has failed to find him. The Universe must succeed in the task."

"Three cheers for Colonel Bugg!"

The cheers were given with a will, and the colonel bowed most profoundly in acknowledgment.

"Now, then, to proceed. My plan is to prevent even an inkling of what I am up to to get to the ears of my rivals; and I want three expert canoeists of your number, one of whom must speak Spanish, to volunteer to go paddling on the Amazon after young Kenmore. Of course, only those who can assure me of their obtaining the consent of parents or guardians need volunteer."

As the colonel paused Tom Blake sprang to his feet, exclaiming:

"I'm ready to go for one."

"I'm another volunteer for South America," cried Frank.

"And so am I," said Jack Moreland.

"Well, well—this is gratifying, I am sure. You are all expert canoeists and not afraid of hardships and dangers?" said the colonel, looking admiringly at the three lads.

There was a modest assent, and Frank added:

"And I speak Spanish. I also read and write the language, having made it a study, and perfected myself in it through actual work for a great importing house engaged in South American trade."

"Good! With the consent of your parents you will sail for Para, Brazil, at 4 p. m. to-morrow via the South American steamer, El Valencia."

"You almost take my breath away, colonel. Still, as far as I'm concerned, it's a go," replied Tom Blake, with his usual impetuosity and impulsiveness.

"Here, too."

"Count on me."

When the colonel had heard the decision of the three boy canoeists, he rubbed his hands in evident satisfaction, and said:

"I think we shall beat the Transcript. You are the devoted friends of Walter Kenmore. That sentiment will make you risk and dare to save him, where mere money rewards would fail as an incentive. You have a perilous task before you. You may all lose your lives. I do not want to conceal the truth from you, and even now, if you wish, you may draw back."

"No! No! No!" came as one voice from the three daring New York boys.

"Very well. You are made of the right metal! Now, then, we will discuss some further details of our great undertaking."

An earnest conversation followed. Every point was discussed, and as far as could possibly be done in advance, every contingency was arranged for. Then the boys gave Colonel Bugg a great surprise. The page of Walter Kenmore's notebook, which he had sent from the forest of the Amazon, was read to the publisher. When Colonel Bugg at length left the boathouse it was agreed the communication from Walter Kenmore should not be given to the press or be made public in any way. The three boy canoeists felt as if they were in a dream. They could hardly make it appear that they were actually to sail for South America on the morrow. If either one of those three lads slept that night very soundly may be doubted. At all events, they were early astir. The circumstances were such that all had obtained the consent of the relatives interested in their welfare, and before sailing time they were all on board the South American steamer.

And when at length the noble steamer sailed down the bay the three boy canoeists knew they were leaving a host of friends behind them who would look eagerly for their return and pray for their success in the noble and heroic undertaking upon which they had set out.

CHAPTER III.—Paddling on the Amazon.

Each of the three young canoeists had taken a small trunk of boating clothes with him, and among the things sent on board for them with the canoes by Colonel Bugg they found three rifles, three pairs of revolvers, three hunting knives, and a supply of ammunition. The boys were delighted with the three canoes. As stated, these were of the "Rob Roy" type, and all canoeists know what that means. The Rob Roy was the first canoe of a safe and handy type ever built. Canoes of that style can be sailed as well as paddled. But let us pass over the voyage, and land the young canoeists in South America, for nothing worthy of special note occurred on the voyage. One bright morning the three young Americans found themselves on the streets of the strange old city of Para, Brazil. They had just landed, and arrangements had been made to leave

their canoes stored in the wharf-house, until called for. As the boys proceeded to the Brazilian Hotel they saw a motley population of Spaniards, or Creoles, Indians, and negroes of mixed races. Arriving at the hotel, Frank brought his Spanish to the front, and asked the proprietor if he could direct him to Senor Avilleos' residence.

"Diablo!" exclaimed the Spanish landlord. "Then the young American senor does not know? Carramba! The Senor Estevan Avilleos is in prison, accused of murder! Ha! He should have been tried eight months ago, but on account of the absence of the young American who went up the Grande river in the little boat, and no more yet has returned, the trial has been put off several times. You see, senor, I speak English."

"What has the young American to do with the senor's crime?"

"Senor Kenmore, the man of the little boat, who lives on the river, witnessed the deed. So at least the Senor Avilleos says. And he has made out that the evidence of the absent American will save him."

The three boy canoeists held a consultation, and resolved to seek an interview with the accused man.

"I am sure he is innocent, or Walter would not have spoken of him as he has done in his notebook," said Frank.

With some difficulty the three American boys succeeded, the following day, in getting an interview with the imprisoned man. They found him to be a handsome young Spanish-American of twenty-odd. He assured our boy canoeists that he and Walter Kenmore had become fast friends in Para, that the death of the man he was accused of murdering occurred in a fair duel, of which Walter and a young native who had also disappeared were the witnesses. Senor Avilleos also added the information that Walter had become betrothed to his beautiful sister, the Donna Inez, who was heartbroken at the non-return of the young canoeist.

"Ah, it is terrible to be shut up here through the machinations of my enemies, when I should be free to baffle them. I fear—indeed, I am certain—the hired assassins of my political rivals have been at work," said Senor Avilleos, finally.

Then Frank read the portion of Walter's diary that had been sent to America from the depths of the Amazon forest in some mysterious way.

"Ah," exclaimed Senor or Don Avilleos, "he speaks of the enemies behind him who sought to kill him to cut off his return to Para. Surely it is my foes who have set enemies after your noble countryman."

"We mean to find and save him," cried Frank.

"Then I charge you, on your life, keep your purpose a secret and get away on the Amazon as soon as you can. If my foes learn you seek to bring back the man who can save me they will become dangerous to you. They will put their human bloodhounds on your track."

The three Americans glanced at each other. At the very outset they saw the shadow of a terrible peril approaching them.

"We will go at once. But we need a guide," said Frank.

"In that I can help you. The brother of Mijar, the daring gaucho who went with Senor Kenmore, will go with you gladly. He would find his broth-

er. He is true, brave, and skillful. The blood of the old Spanish grandees flows in the veins of the gauchos, or men of the pampas or plains. Nothing affrights them. I will tell you where to find the brother of Senor Kenmore's guide."

The young Spaniard was as good as his word.

The three young Americans, upon leaving the prison, sought the abode of the gaucho. He was a tall, handsome fellow, with Atlantean shoulders, clad in a half Spanish, half native Indian costume, the most striking feature of which was a scarlet poncho. Arrangements were quickly made with Ricardo—such was his name—and after making a few necessary purchases, the lads took to the great river in their canoes at midnight. Ricardo had his own boat, a native canoe, under the stars while silence reigned, and no one could be seen about the three boy canoeists, and the gaucho paddled away on the mighty Amazon. They had carted their canoes out to a lonely place beyond the city, and they congratulated themselves that there was no witness to their embarkation.

Towards morning they were in the great forest, where mighty trees, such as they had never dreamed of, cast their shadow upon the water.

Suddenly the gaucho, who was in the lead, stopped paddling. He was almost abreast of a small island. The three boys, each in his own canoe, were close behind, and under the brilliant southern moon it was almost as light as day. As the guide's canoe stopped, two large canoes, each containing ten half-naked men, who looked like the savages of the forest, dashed out from the cover of the island. The occupants of the canoes were armed with bows, arrows and long spears. They came straight for the Young Americans and the man of the pampas. The latter uttered a warning shout. The boy canoeists began to back water, and then each skillfully turned his canoe. But the hostile canoes were coming close. Jack dropped his paddle and picked up his rifle, while he shouted to his companions:

"We can't run, and have got to fight!"

"Wah! Ho! Wah! Ho!" yelled the black men in the great canoes. There came the twanging of the bow-strings, and several feathered arrows passed over the heads of the boy canoeists. They shuddered at the recollection that the Indians of the Amazon frequently steeped the heads of their war arrows in deadly poison.

Bang! bang! Two shots were fired by Frank and Jack; Tom's weapon failed him, though he pulled the trigger. The next instant a cry of horror goes up from Tom and Frank. They all see a lasso fall over Jack's head, and behold him jerked out of his canoe bodily and drawn through the water toward the canoe of the savages, struggling with all his might. The wild, exultant yells of the savages, one of whom had cast the lasso, rang out over the Amazon, and the half-naked warriors brandished their weapons about their heads.

CHAPTER IV.—In the Mighty Forest.

Tom Blake and Frank Woodward desired, above all things, at that moment of terrible peril, to save Jack Moreland. But it seemed that the young canoeist was doomed to become the captive of the Amazon savages.

"Yes. It is a fight for life now!" cried Tom, echoing the desperate words of Frank Woodward, as he saw the black men of the Amazon drawing the struggling captive at the end of the lasso nearer and nearer to their canoes.

The ensuing moment something entirely unlooked for, and most startling to Jack Moreland's friends, as well as his enemies, transpired. Suddenly the lasso in the hands of the native canoeists parted under water, and the black rascals who were tugging at the rawhide strand so lustily in their efforts to drag the captive into the war canoe, were hurled backward upon their companions. As the lasso parted, the struggling boy at the end of it disappeared under the dark waves of the mighty river. His vanishment was instantaneous, as if invisible hands had suddenly drawn him down into the dark depths. The hearts of Tom Blake and Frank Woodward leaped with the impulse of a great dread, as they thought that their brave young comrade might have been seized in the jaws of a crocodile, or some other monster of the South American waters. Instantly, while the surprised savages hesitated in their advance, as if waiting for Jack to reappear above the surface of the dark tide, Tom and Frank paddled lustily downstream. But they almost constantly glanced backward, seeking to discover if Jack returned from the dark depths to which he appeared to have mysteriously descended. Jack did not reappear, and the savages, again making the waters echo with their shouts, came on in pursuit of the young Americans. The war canoes did not gain upon the two young Americans for some time. The island, behind which the savages had been concealed in their canoes, was left behind, and the boy canoeists were shooting by one of these wonderful "floating islands," for which the Amazon is famous, when Tom said:

"We have got to hide from those black rascals, Frank, or sooner or later they are bound to run us down."

"That's so. Let's attempt to make one of the numerous inlets we noticed on the north bank coming upstream."

"All right. We'll try for it now, while the floating island is between us and the savages."

The two boy canoeists immediately began paddling at great speed in the direction of the northern bank, half a mile away. A dark object loomed up before them at no great distance, and they presently saw, as they approached it, that it was another floating island, smaller than the one between them and their pursuers, and covered with tropical vegetation.

"That floating island must have passed close by the spot where poor Jack Moreland went down, never to rise more," said Frank, indicating the island drifting near.

As they shot their canoes behind it Tom replied:

"That's so. The drifting island passed the scene of our fight, and of the disappearance of Jack and Ricardo, the gaucho."

The yells of the black men of the Amazon were now heard nearer than they had sounded for some moments. Increasing the speed of their canoes in a gallant spurt, as they might have done at the close of a regatta on the dear old Hudson, far away in their homeland, the boys shot into the dark shadows of the mighty forest, on the northern bank of the Amazon. Paddling close in shore,

they found the mouth of a small tributary of the great river, and boldly entered it. The way was devious, dark, and dangerous, but any danger was preferable to that from which they were seeking to escape. Sometimes they had to lift the matted and vine-entwined tropical growths which hung low entirely across the stream. Numerous monkeys, parrots, and birds of various sorts were frightened away from their night resting-place by the canoeists. The discordant voices of the tropical birds and beasts made a saturnalia of sounds in the forest. But ere long the two lads paused, satisfied that they had eluded their pursuers, at least for a time. They believed the savages of the Amazon had passed on downstream without entering the inlet. Resting on their paddles, the two lads listened and waited for some time in silence. Only the voices of the birds and animals they had alarmed, and which were now growing fainter, reached them.

"We are like two castaways now that we have lost our guide—Ricardo, the Gaucho. At least we are left alone on a river to us entirely unknown," said Tom, disconsolately, at length.

"But now day is approaching. Let's draw our canoes under the cover of the dense bushes, have breakfast, and then sleep and rest until the night comes again, bringing its cool shadows. Then we will push on."

"All right. I begin to feel a reminder that I have a most healthy appetite, and also that sleep is something of a luxury."

The lads secreted their canoes in the primeval forest, and while they made a breakfast of the food they had brought with them in their canoes, they admired the wonders of nature all around them.

CHAPTER V.—In the Shadow of Doom.

Frank and Tom had fallen asleep on a green bank, under the shade of a giant palm. The sun crept higher and higher, and anon the sound of stealthy footsteps sounded faintly in the cover near the sleeping canoeists. Evidently two persons were approaching the giant palm, under which the young Americans reposed as serenely and peacefully as if sleeping safely in bed in New York. The bushes near the giant palm were presently softly pushed aside, and a dark and savage face peered from behind the leafy canopy.

A silent signal, a wave of the hand by the savage spy, and a second face was noiselessly thrust forward from the screen of foliage. But the second face was not that of a native of the Amazon valley. It was the face of a Spaniard whose yellow skin and pointed beard contrasted in a marked manner with the black face and beardless skin of the South American Indian. The face of the Spaniard became as savage and exultant in its expression as that of the Indian when he beheld the sleeping canoeists. Another silent signal, this time made by the Spaniard, and then the Indian drew from a puma-skin quiver one of those famous blow-pipes used by the natives, which supply the place of firearms in many parts of South America.

While the savage covered Tom Blake with his deadly blow-gun, the Spaniard directed his weapon at Frank Woodward. The fate of the

boy canoeists depended on what might transpire during the next ensuing moment, and it appeared that nothing could save them. But suddenly a dark object launched itself at the Indian and his Spanish comrade from the rear. A man clad in the garb of a Gaucho dealt two swift and terrible blows, the first of which stretched the Indian at his feet, the second descending upon the skull of the Spaniard. As the Spaniard fell his pistol was discharged, but the bullet harmlessly cleft the empty air above the heads of the sleeping boys. The report of the discharged weapon sounded like a clap of thunder in the silent forest, and the boys were instantly awakened. Then a glad cry broke from the lips of the young canoeists in unison.

"Ricardo! Ricardo!" they exclaimed as they recognized the gaucho guide who had so mysteriously disappeared from the canoe at the moment when Jack Moreland was lassoed by the savage on the river.

Then there came a shout from the cover in the rear of Ricardo, for he the man who had so opportunely arrived to save the boys really was, and a youthful figure bounded into sight.

"Jack!"

"Jack alive and safe!"

As the cries went up from Tom and Frank they recognized their brave young comrade who, by reason of his age and heroism, was virtually the leader of the expedition. That was indeed a glad moment of rejoicing and reunion. While the lads embraced and exchanged affectionate words, Ricardo the gaucho, with a grim smile on his noble-looking, bronzed face, coolly proceeded to bind the two fallen men hand and foot, using the tough and pliable tendril of the forest creeper in lieu of cords.

"Now an explanation is in order. You must tell us how this has all come about. How you were saved. Where you met Ricardo, and, most of all, how you came to arrive at our camp just in time to save us?" presently said Frank.

"Oh, as to that, we owe everything to Ricardo. Ah, he is a brave and noble fellow. It was a lucky hour for us; indeed, when we engaged him to accompany us," replied Jack.

The gaucho made a disparaging gesture, as if modestly disclaiming all praise, but Jack continued.

"Suddenly, while the savages were dragging me through the water at the end of the lasso, the rawhide thong was severed by a slash from a knife, a human head, the head of Ricardo, came up from under the surface of the water the next moment close beside me, and its owner bade me dive and follow him in a swim under water for all life. I obeyed, and we struck out for one of those strange floating islands, which was coming downstream toward us. We reached the island, concealed ourselves on it, and floated with it until it lodged on a bar, near the shore. Then we made the river bank, and came upon the very Indians of the Amazon from where we had so narrowly escaped. The savages were in camp. Their canoes and my own and Ricardo's were drawn up on the shore. We secured our canoes and paddled back upstream. When dawn came we were hidden at some distance south of this point on this inlet. We saw the Spaniard and the Indian go by in a small canoe. Recognizing

the Indian as one of the band we had escaped from, Ricardo followed the latter and his Spaniard comrade. Creeping along the bank, we heard enough to know that the two were searching for you and that the entire band of savages had separated to search all the inlets and passages. Ricardo, meanwhile, identified the Spaniard as a noted bravo and swordsman of Para, who is no doubt leagued with the enemies of Senor Avilleos, our lost canoeist's friend. Returning to me, Ricardo proposed that we follow the spies in our canoes. We did so, and you know the rest."

"And now, senors, we must away as quickly as the condor wings his flight for the snowy Andes. The enemy will soon be on our trail. We will leave these men here," said the gaucho coolly.

A few moments later the canoeists were again on the water. Guided by the gaucho, they made rapid progress along the tributary of the Amazon which they had entered. Never once had the knights of the pampas thought of turning back, it seemed. A characteristic feature of the Amazon is the system of back channels, joining the tributaries, and the igarapes, or canoe-paths from water-course to water-course, through the forest.

"Ha!" exclaimed Ricardo the gaucho, "one may travel a thousand miles up the Amazon without ever entering it."

"A wonderful river, indeed," replied Frank, whose canoe was abreast the guide's little craft.

"The greatest of all rivers, and Ricardo loves it, though he was born on the wild pampas, where the Mamelukes of South America, or, as we say, the gauchos, are the only free, unconquered race of the continent," responded Ricardo, and his keen-sighted, coal-black eyes flashed proudly.

Still no sounds of pursuit had reached them, and pointing to a stationary island the gaucho said:

"Yonder we will make a camp and rest for a few hours."

Reaching the island they concealed their canoes and started to walk inland to a grove of palms. But they had not advanced far when a series of singular sounds reached their hearing. The sounds were not unlike the grunt of a porker, and mingled with those sounds were those like the clashing of tusks together.

"What is it?" cried Jack.

"The peccary or wild hog," replied the gaucho.

"And a big troop, too. We must get into the tree-tops or we are lost," cried the gaucho guide the next moment.

The whole party made for the trees at full speed, and by means of the clinging vines that encircled the trunks of the trees, quickly ascended to the lower branches. Scarcely had the quartette reached a safe height when the herd of the wild hogs of the Amazon appeared in sight. From somewhere near the shore of the island the wild hogs, like a pack of bloodhounds, had taken the trail of the lads. In a moment the trees in which the canoeists had sought refuge was surrounded, and the fierce little animals looked up at them with fiery eyes, and clashed their trunks disappointedly. The boys were

about to open fire upon the wild hogs with their rifles, but the gaucho restrained them.

"Hold, do not shoot!" he exclaimed. "Every shot will serve only to enrage the wild hogs, and they will keep us treed the longer."

The boys withheld their fire. The wild hogs kept on grunting and rooting about the trees for some time, but at length, as if giving up the siege for good, they trotted away. The canoeists descended when Ricardo had assured them that the fierce little animals which were so much dreaded by the hunters of the Amazon were gone to a safe distance. But another peril was near. Scarcely had they reached the ground when the gaucho exclaimed, in low and thrilling tones:

"Down, senors! Down for your lives!"

As he uttered the startling warning the guide of the Amazon threw himself flat on the earth. The boys followed his example, and looking ahead they saw a long line of dark figures marching through the trees.

"The Condor-heads! The Condor-heads!" exclaimed the gaucho in a whisper, and the boys noted that many of the dark warriors they saw through the trees wore helmets of condor skulls.

"They are the mysterious people who captured Walter Kenmore," said Jack, and the next moment the canoeists had cause for great alarm.

CHAPTER VI.—Tom A Captive.

A wild yell went up from the savages who had just been discovered by the boy canoeists and the gaucho. The shout was the announcement that the young adventurers and their comrade had been seen by the mysterious warriors. A score of the nearly naked, powerfully built, and ferocious looking Indians, led by a cacique or chief wearing a helmet of condor skulls, came rushing in the direction of the canoeists immediately. The latter fled, and as they ran the gauchos said excitedly:

"The Indios misterios. The wonderful condor heads of a far distant country of the upper Amazon. Often have I heard legends of such a race, but never before have I seen any of them."

The mysterious Indians were wonderfully fleet of foot, and they gained upon the canoeists despite all the efforts of the latter to distance them. The gaucho led in the race and, in single file, the boys followed him. Of course they all ran for their canoes.

But Tom stepped on a round stone and sprained his ankle severely. Nor was that mishap the end of his misfortunes. Stumbling into an almost concealed water-hole, as he limped along, poor Tom fell headfirst. The water-hole was quite deep, with steep sides, and while he vainly tried to extricate himself his comrades, ignorant of what had happened, kept on. The mysterious Indians soon came up to the water-hole and discovered Tom. Their exultant yells rang in the ears of the unlucky lad, and he saw their dark savage faces looking down at him. Half a dozen of the warriors leaped into the water-hole, and Tom was dragged out. Just then the lad was missed by his comrades. They glanced back, and their consternation and alarm may be imagined when they saw their young comrade in the midst

of the Indians. The captured boy was left in charge of several of the warriors, and the rest came on in pursuit of his party.

But the canoeists reached their concealed crafts and immediately paddled away from the island at their best speed. Of course, they could do nothing looking to the rescue of Tom then. Evidently the canoes of the strange warriors were on the opposite side of the island, for after running along the shore for some distance, discharging arrows at the escaping party, the savages darted off in the direction whence they had come. The three friends of Tom reached the neighborhood of the north bank of the river as quickly as possible.

"We must run into some back channel. Those black men with the long spears will be after us soon in their war canoes," said the gaucho.

"Now we have two bands of enemies to fear," replied Frank.

"Yes. But we have at least met the men of the mysterious race much sooner than we anticipated. Surely they are the people Walter Kenmore mentioned in his diary. He particularly stated therein that the chiefs wore helmets of condor skulls. But poor Tom! I suppose he will be carried away to the unknown country by the Condor-heads, to share Walter Kenmore's captivity, if, indeed, the poor lad is not immediately put to death," answered Jack.

"Or rescued," the gaucho replied.

"What? Is there a possibility that we can save Tom?" cried Jack.

"Ricardo means to try. But yonder is the mouth of a channel leading back from the main stream. No more talk now. Let us seek to get into the channel at once."

The river guide sent his canoe through the water rapidly, and soon shot into the channel he had discovered. The two boy canoeists followed, and the party continued to paddle on swiftly for some time. They did not converse until the gaucho, who appeared to be searching for some landmark, suddenly ceased paddling, and pointing to a giant palm—the most lofty and magnificent specimen the canoeists had yet seen on the Amazon, exclaimed:

"The ladder tree! Ricardo thought he had not lost his bearings."

"Why do you call that palm a ladder tree? Oh, I see. It is notched so that one may climb to its umbrella-shaped branches!" Jack cried.

"Right, senor, it is one of the 'spying trees' of the gauchos. A party of the pampas hunters, of which I was a member, years ago notched the tree. From its top you can see many miles."

The river guide had begun to climb the ladder tree while he was speaking. He reached the top and disappearing among the foliage, while the two lads below watched him with admiration, for he exhibited the agility and muscle of a trained athlete. An exclamation from the gaucho presently announced that he had made some observation of importance. He came hurrying down the tree, and as he alighted upon the ground he cried:

"The Spaniard and his Indians are coming. But they are far distant, down the river. The Indios misterios—the Condor-heads—are looking for us, but they have missed the channel we entered."

"What caused the exclamation you uttered in the tree-top? You have not told us all you saw, I think, Ricardo?" questioned Jack.

"No, I saw the main band of the Condor-heads on the island. They have been on a foray, in quest of slaves, and they have a large number of women of the lower river tribes with them, and a few men. Among the latter I recognized Calka, the monkey-trapper, a native of the Amazon, partially civilized, who gains a livelihood by catching monkeys which he sells in Para for exportation."

"This Calka is your friend?"

"Yes. And a brave fellow, but almost too fond of gain. Calka is one to look out for himself at all times. But now to my plan of rescue, for I have one, and I mean to do my best for your comrade," continued the gaucho.

"When night comes we will trail up the Condor-heads, if they leave the island. Then leave it to Ricardo to enter the camp and free the young Americano; I shall also liberate Calka, if I can."

"Good!" exclaimed Jack. "After all, if we can only save Tom, perhaps we may count it a fortunate thing that we met the Condor-heads."

Presently the gaucho again ascended the ladder-tree. The two lads climbed up after him and, from the top of the palm, all three scanned the vast expanse of country which was clearly visible from the elevation. They saw two great war canoes, unlike any they had previously seen, being paddled toward the islands by the Condor-heads who had come in pursuit of them. Evidently the mysterious Indians had abandoned the pursuit as futile. On the island the main band of the strange race were making preparations for embarking. Tom was among them, and while his comrades continued watching the lad's captors they saw him hurried into one of the great canoes.

In a very short time the entire force of the Condor-heads with their captives were pulling up the Amazon. The boy canoeists and the gaucho did not fail to cast searching glances downstream. But they did not discover the Spaniard and his Indians. Ricardo said that no doubt the Spaniard and his party had taken to some interior channel. The trio had just descended from the ladder tree when the gaucho shouted, in a tone of alarm:

"El tigre! El tigre!"

CHAPTER VII.—Ricardo's Peril.

The great striped body of a jaguar shot, like a cannon ball, straight at Ricardo, who chanced to be nearest the tree, from which the dreaded animal made his leap. But the lithe gaucho suddenly leaped aside, and his keen-bladed hunting-knife glittered for a moment ere it was plunged to the hilt in the body of the jaguar. Backward darted Ricardo as the South American tiger, with a cry of rage of pain, flung himself into the air the instant after he struck the earth. The jaguar wheeled to come at the gaucho again, for the wound he had received was not a mortal one.

Already, however, Jack Moreland had his rifle at his shoulder, and the detonation of the discharged weapon mingled with the roar of the

maddened tiger. Jack had taken a swift, but deadly aim. His bullet entered the breast of the tiger, and he fell almost at the feet of Ricardo, tearing up the earth, in furious death throes.

"Well done, young senor," the gaucho remarked, coolly. "That was an excellent shot!"

"I should like to have that tiger's skin to carry back to New York as a trophy, but I cannot burden myself with it," said Jack, as he and Frank stood over the striped terror of the Amazon.

"The report of your gun may draw enemies here. Who knows but some of the Spaniard's band are near?" said Frank, as the gaucho strode toward the canoes a moment subsequently.

"We will embark at once," Ricardo observed, and then, pointing at some dark specks against the cerulean sky above their heads, he added:

"Those are condors winging their flight for the Andes. The great birds visit the valley of the Amazon, but seldom stay long. They like to hover above the highest mountain peaks, and I have seen them more than five hundred feet above Chimborazo."

"Condors are plentiful where the mysterious savages come from, or helmets of condor skulls would not be so plentiful among the chiefs," replied Frank.

"True. Ah, it may be that the trail of the Indos mysterious will lead us to the great mountains," assented Ricardo.

"What was it that the leaves of Walter Kenmore's diary contained about a water-way clear across South America?" asked Jack.

"The purport of which you allude to was that Mijar—Walter's faithful guide—had told him there was a water-way across the entire continent, through the Amazon and its tributaries," replied Frank.

"Yes, that was it, and so it may turn out that the strange Indians can make the journey even to the Andes by canoe."

While the above conversation was taking place, the party were getting under way. They paddled over the channel route which they had taken from the river, and in a short time they re-entered the main stream. Then they discovered that the mysterious Indians who had made Tom a captive had passed out of sight up the river. With the gaucho in the lead the party paddled in the direction taken by the captors of the boy canoeist. They had now to pass the island where they had first encountered the Condor-heads, and could they have seen within the dense thicket at its southern end they would have discovered a score of natives of the lower Amazon and a white man with a pointed beard.

When night fell and the darkness became complete, the two American boys and the gaucho were rather close upon Tom's captors. Before the shadows obscured them entirely the friends of the captured boy had caught sight of the band that was hurrying the lad away. A little later the gleam of a number of campfires on the river bank told the canoeists that the party they were in pursuit of had landed and made a camp.

"Now I am well pleased. We shall see if the strange Indos are more cunning than the men of the pampas," said the gaucho as he noted the campfires of the Condor-heads.

A landing was made, and when the night had well advanced Ricardo announced that the time had come for him to set out on his mission of peril—to rescue Tom and his friend Calka, the native. The two lads were eager to accompany the venturesome gaucho, but he stoutly asserted that he would have no companions—that he could do best alone. Silently he put off in his canoe, after bidding the two boys to await his return where they were, unless the coming of an enemy drove them away.

But at length their solicitude and anxiety regarding Ricardo and Tom caused them to lapse into suspenseful silence. Almost breathlessly they listened, seeking to catch any sound from the river that might convey a warning of the return of the gaucho. At last the faint sound of paddles reached the hearing of the eager listeners. The sound emanated from upstream. It drew nearer and nearer. Presently, in the darkness, the canoe the boys heard seemed very near.

"Ricardo is going by us in the darkness," said Jack.

"Here! Here! This way, Ricardo!" called out Frank cautiously.

The sounds ceased for an instant, then began, and in a moment or so a canoe grounded near the boys. They came forward. But they would have beat a retreat again almost instantly, could they have done so. They found themselves suddenly surrounded by a company of dark forms, and from out of the environing gloom a voice reached them, saying:

"Diablo! This is well. We have the Americans at last, and we shall take good care they do not bring back the man who can save the hated leader of the aristocrats—Senor Avilleos."

The speaker was Gomez, the Spaniard, and the two boy canoeists shuddered as they comprehended that they had fallen into the hands of the foe who had pursued them from Para. But meanwhile, how fared it with the brave gaucho, who had gone to venture into the camp of the Condor-heads?

Paddling silently, as when he left his two boy comrades, Ricardo proceeded until he was near the camp of the Condor-heads. Then he made a landing. But just as he set foot upon the shore, a tall warrior of the unknown tribe sprang up before him.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Gaucho in the Camp of the Enemy.

The gaucho was surprised, but he acted with the celerity of thought. As the lips of the mysterious Indian were parted for the utterance of a yell of alarm, which would have been fatal to Ricardo's plans, the latter's rifle crashed down upon the head of the savage.

"So, so. There is one less of the savage men who have carried my brother and the young American away to their own country."

It was true. The terrible blow dealt by the gaucho had broken the skull of the savage. The former drew the body of the Indian into the water, pushing it out into the swift tide upon which it drifted away downstream. Creeping forward as stealthily as possible Ricardo soon

paused behind the trunk of a great Massarandanha, or cow tree, which the Indians had notched to extract its milky fluid. From this hiding place the Indians, in their camp, were quite distinctly seen by the gaucho; the light of their camp-fire rendered them visible. Ricardo saw Tom Blake bound to a tree in the camp of the Condor-heads, and near the lad Calka, the native monkey hunter, was secured in the same manner.

The gaucho felt that his time for action had now arrived. He began a stealthy advance; creeping forward silently he approached the nearest guard. It was the purpose of Ricardo to overpower the guards silently—without allowing them a chance to sound an alarm.

Nearer and nearer the gaucho crept toward the unsuspecting savage until at length he was so close that he could reach the dusky sentinel with a single leap. Measuring the distance with his eye, despite the gloom, the man of the pampas suddenly sprang upon the sentinel. The dull thud of his weapon sounded on the skull of the savage, and he went down stricken as the man who had surprised Ricardo on the river bank had been. But Ricardo had scarcely counted upon the sound of the blow being so distinct, and he was disconcerted as through the gloom partially illuminated by the dying campfires he saw the other guards coming toward him.

To snatch up the long spear belonging to the fallen savage, don his condor skull helmet and stand in the place of the fallen guard was with the gaucho but the work of a moment. The second guard was close upon Ricardo, and he had not yet discovered the deception of which he was being made the victim, when he spoke in a strange language. The gaucho for answer again swung his rifle in the air, and it descended upon the head of the second guard. He fell, knocked senseless, before he comprehended what hit him. Silent then was the camp of the Condor-heads, and their prisoners were unguarded.

Then the gaucho made haste to reach the captives. A few slashes of his keen-bladed knife served to sever the cords with which their captors had bound the boy canoeist and the native.

"Come, follow me; speak not a word, make no sound until we are well clear of the camp," admonished the gaucho then.

Stealthily the trio, with Ricardo in the lead, set out to leave the camp. They knew that the peril of discovery was very great, and that a single shout of alarm would awaken the entire band of Indos mysterios. But the imminent peril was safely passed. The trio traversed the camp of the sleeping savages, and passed beyond it undetected. Then they hastened rapidly in the direction of the place on the river bank where the gaucho had left his canoe. They were not intercepted, and, entering the canoe, they paddled silently downstream. Suddenly Ricardo raised his paddle and made a back stroke to stop the canoe. Then he raised his hand warningly and bent forward to listen. His comrades did the same. Tom at least heard nothing.

"What do you hear?" the rescued boy asked, in a whisper.

"The sound of paddles. 'A canoe is going downstream ahead of us,' replied Ricardo.

Rapidly but silently the gaucho paddled after that. A few moments, and the silence of the

great river was rudely broken. The report of a rifle rang out, and then came a shout uttered, as Ricardo and Tom knew, by Jack Moreland.

We left the two boy canoeists, Frank Woodward and Jack Moreland, surrounded by the Spaniard and his band of Indians. Suddenly the rifle of Jack Moreland sprang to his shoulder. He discharged the weapon and one of the Indians fell. Then the brave boy and his comrade made a rush. They sprang for the river. The Spaniard and his band were surprised at the daring attempt at escape.

"Fire! Give them a shower of arrows!" cried the Spaniard, as he saw the canoeists about to shoot away from the river bank in their wonderful little crafts.

The Indians uttered fierce cries as they obeyed the order of the Spaniard.

"Down! Quick for your life, Frank!" shouted Jack, as he heard the order of the Spaniard. He threw himself flat in his canoe as he spoke. Frank followed the advice and the example of his comrade. As they lay sheltered by the sides of their canoes the first volley of arrows from the Indians flew harmlessly over them. Then up they sprang and sent their canoes further from the shore. The Spaniards and the Indians leaped into their great war-canoes and put off in pursuit of the canoeists. The next moment the latter grounded on a sand bar only a short distance from the shore. While the lads were trying to get off the bar the enemy came close. But all at once the canoe containing the gaucho and the two persons he had rescued came around the end of the bar, and bang! bang! bang! sounded the report of a repeating rifle, as it was thrice discharged. The weapon was aimed and fired by the gaucho. He had recognized the voice of the Spaniard, who had just uttered an exultant shout. Three Indians among the men who paddled the great war canoe fell under the fire of the gaucho. The Spaniard's canoe stopped. The next instant a terrible cry burst from the lips of the gaucho, and he exclaimed:

"Merci! It is coming. The flood! The pororoca! I had forgotten the date!"

CHAPTER IX.—A Terrible Storm.

"To the bank! We must get off the river before the pororoca strikes us, or we are lost!" cried the gaucho.

They paddled desperately for the shore. It was a race for life, with the wonderful destructive flood of the Amazon that now ensued. The canoe of the gaucho and the two Rob Roys were almost to the bank of the river, when the flood struck the little bar upon which the canoes of the two boys had grounded. There sounded a tremendous roar, as the great wave struck the bar and broke over it in a foaming billow.

The bar was swept away. The powerful wind that accompanied it carried the flood wave on beyond the obstruction, upstream, like a thunderbolt. The swell of the water inshore lifted the canoes and hurled them in among the trees. When the wave had passed, the canoeists found themselves at some distance from the bank, high and dry in their little craft.

"Up with the canoes and follow me, or we shall have to fight a battle with the Spaniard's band," cried Ricardo, when the flood wave had spent its fury at that point in the river.

The party were in motion almost at once. This time they all went rapidly inland, led by Ricardo. A march of about three-quarters of a mile brought the party to a water course. It was one of the systems of back channels, peculiar to the Amazon, which we have had occasion to fully describe. Having shoved their canoes into the water, and being all ready to embark, Ricardo called a halt, and remarked:

"Calka has told me remarkable news. You have related to me how you received a message from your lost friend, which he must have sent by a secret messenger from the mission village, where he was captured by the Indos mysterios."

"Yes, yes. Tell us what news Calka has imparted?" cried Jack, eagerly.

"Calka was at the mission village when the Indos mysterios raided it."

"Oh! Are you about to tell us he was the secret messenger who conveyed the leaves of Walter Kenmore's diary to Para and mailed it?"

"Yes, such is the fact. Calka's life had been saved in the forest by the young Americano. He sought to serve Walter Kenmore. But he kept his own council, learning in Para that villains had planned to assassinate the young Americano on the river that he might not return to bear witness in favor of Senor Avilleos."

"Can Calka guide us to the mission village?" asked Frank.

"He can and will, if we deem it advisable to go there. But for three days we must not venture on the main channel of the Amazon. At the end of that time the danger will be passed—the flood tide will be over."

"Does Calka know anything about the Condor-heads that is new to us?"

"No. But he has told me one thing that gives me satisfaction. Calka says that Walter Kenmore agreed to mark the trail of the Indos mysterios to their unknown dwelling-place, if he could find an opportunity to do so undetected."

Frank then addressed the monkey-trapper in Spanish. A conversation ensued between them, during which the lad elicited full particulars regarding the capture of Walter Kenmore and his faithful guide, Mijar, the brother of Ricardo. Frank translated all that the native said for the benefit of his comrades. And then they set out on the channel to which the gaucho had guided them.

"We are going now to the summer camp of Calka," said Ricardo.

Without further adventures the canoeists arrived at a small island among the ingarapes or water ways. This was Calka's summer camp. Here the monkey-trapper made his headquarters during half the year. When the rainy season came he put his captured monkeys on a great raft, and paddled down the Amazon to Para. A hut in the center of the island, surrounded by wicker and wood cages for the monkeys, was soon reached. For three days the party remained on the island, after the gaucho had made a scout, and ascertained that the Condor-heads were encamped some miles to the north, evidently waiting for the subsidence of the flood waves.

"Ah, the Condor-heads were wise. Evidently they cannot make their way through the ingarape to their unknown home, and so they have to wait until it is safe for their canoes on the main channel," said Ricardo, when he reported to his comrades that the Indos mysterios were in camp.

One day the jungle near Calka's camp was discovered to be on fire. All hands were compelled to seek shelter some other place. Calka owned a hut on the other side of this island, and entering their canoes, they paddled to this hut, and resolved to stay there. That night Ricardo, who entertained the fear that enemies might discover the monkey trapper's hut and attack it during the night, stood guard. Suddenly the boy canoeists, near midnight, were awakened by the voice of the gaucho.

"Up! up!" he shouted. "A storm is upon us!"

The boys and the native sprang to their feet and rushed out of the hut. A terrible flash of lightning at that moment illuminated the forest; then came the crash like the explosion of an enormous magazine, and a great tree, stricken by the blast, went crashing down not ten feet away. The shock threw Fank and Tom to the earth, and the gaucho and the other two members of the party staggered back against the wall of the hut. The wind came rushing across the island with the fury of a tornado. By the orders of Ricardo each of his comrades threw himself upon the earth and clung to the trunk of a tough variety of the frexi, which no earthly tower can uproot. The water came down in torrents, and it seemed that if the storm continued along the whole island would be submerged. The rapid rising of the waters of the lagoon was something wonderful. In an incredible short time the waves were sweeping over the island, and the adventurers had to take to their canoes or drown. They entered their crafts.

"Try to keep together!" shouted Ricardo, as he entered the large native canoe with Tom and Calka.

But he might as well have called upon the winds to cease or the waters to subside. His advice could not be obeyed in that furious storm. The wind sent the canoes speeding before the gale. In the darkness they were separated. Jack Moreland crouched down in his frail craft and let it take its own course, with each moment he expected it would be dashed to pieces against a tree trunk. Frank Woodward did the same. Suddenly, when he had drifted before the gale for some distance, his canoe stopped with a shock which came very near precipitating him into the dark waters. The canoe remained where it had stopped, and soon Frank found it had lodged in the forked branch of a tree. Fortunately the storm began to lull, almost at once, and the canoe remained fastened in the tree as the water receded. Meanwhile Jack met with a thrilling experience. His canoe was cast up on a steep embankment, and leaving it after he had drawn it beyond the reach of the flood, he advanced still higher. All at once there came a flash of lightning, and the electric light revealed to the lad that he had stumbled right into the camp of the Condor-heads. A yell from one of the mysterious savages announced that his presence was detected.

CHAPTER X.—After the Storm.

Jack Moreland's presence of mind did not desert him for a single instant. He knew that his only hope of escape lay in immediate flight. Wheeling like a flash, while yet the yell of the mysterious Indian that announced he was seen rang in his ears, he bounded away. He made for his canoe, and after him he heard the entire band of the Condor-heads coming. In the impenetrable gloom Jack reached the water at a point other than that which he sought. He had strayed away from the spot where he had left his canoe. Before him lay the black water and behind him came his yelling foes. The young canoeists dared not enter the water. The rushing waves would quickly carry him away to the main channel. He would be buffeted and beaten by the torrent until he sank to rise no more. He ran desperately along the water's edge, praying that he might find the canoe. Nearer and yet nearer sounded the yells of the Condor-heads. The shrill voices of the mysterious Indians sounded above the noise of the now swiftly subsiding storm. A cold sweat started upon the head of the boy. He felt like one battling against fate as he fled on, and yet failed to find his canoe. Again the lightning came in a brilliant flood that for one single moment made the night as light as day. A terrible chorus of exultant yells came from the Condor-heads close behind the imperilled canoeist. The mysterious Indians had seen the light of the electrical illumination. They were now evidently quite sure of his capture. But at the eleventh hour, as it were, the brave lad was to be saved. The lightning that disclosed him to his foes as he ran for his life also revealed to him the object which he sought. A glad, thankful ejaculation fell from the lips of the lad as he saw the canoe he had left on the hillside. Encouraged now, he made a spurt in the race, and gained his canoe in advance of the pursuers. Leaping to the water and dragging his light craft into the waves, he cleared the land. With the skill of an expert he deftly embarked and sent the gallant Rob Roy shooting away under the impulse of swift and powerful strokes of the paddles. Into the water rushed the Condor-heads. In their determination to capture the boy canoeist the savages swam after him for some distance, but the hopelessness of the pursuit soon became apparent to them, and they turned back. On and on, through the darkness went Jack. Perhaps for half an hour the lone canoeist had been paddling on the flood of the Amazon when all at once the report of a rifle rang out thrice over the black tide.

"That was Ricardo's gun. The gaucho is firing to signal me or Frank. No doubt he wished to draw us to him," said Jack mentally.

He shaped his course in the direction whence the shot he had heard seemed to emanate. Presently he fired an answering signal of three shots, and again the report of the gaucho's weapon guided him on. In a short time Jack reached the large canoe. In it he found Ricardo, Calka and Tom, all safe.

The canoe was secured to a tree, and as the gale had subsided it floated on the flood safely. Jack had barely recounted his adventures when a shout

was heard, and a moment later Frank's canoe shot up to the tree to which his friends' crafts were fastened. He too had heard the shot signal of the gaucho, and guided by the sound made his way to him. The gaucho said that during the storm the great canoe he had managed with the assistance of Calka, the monkey hunter, and Tom had nearly capsized several times. He added that he considered the adventure of the night the most perilous of any that had ever befallen him on the great river. The dawn was most welcome when it came. As the sunlight began to fall upon the waves the party saw that the flood had done great damage in the forest. Trees of great size, that possessed not elasticity, had been riven at the trunks and overthrown. Masses of debris were heaped here and there, where trees that had withstood the onset of the waters made a barrier for them. The party paddled north and entered a sheltered lagoon. There they partook of food they carried with them. Suddenly the alert gaucho raised his hand in a signal for silence. At length he said:

"I hear the sound of paddles. The Condor-heads are coming up the river. The chances are they will pass the mouth of the ingarape without discovering it."

The mouth of the channel was almost hidden by a mass of debris cast into it during the night storm. Ricardo silently paddled his canoe south a short distance, and finally stopped where he could peer around the obstruction. Completely concealed, he watched the river. In a few moments, as he had predicted, the Condor-heads were seen coming up the river. It was a time of suspense and danger for the concealed canoeists, as the mysterious Indian whom they hoped to shadow to their unknown land drew nearer. But the enemy passed the channel and made no pause. The concealed canoeists drew deep breaths of relief and satisfaction as they saw the Condor-heads go by. Rapidly the mysterious Indians, in half a dozen great canoes, several of which were mostly laden with captives, paddled up-stream. A bend in the river soon hid them from the sight of the canoeists. Then the latter again took the water trail, with the large canoe, manned by Ricardo, Calka and Tom, in the lead. The river journey was continued for many days, and always the gaucho assured the boy canoeists that they were following the Condor-heads. Occasionally the water trailers caught a glimpse of their quarry far ahead, but they believed that they were not themselves discovered. The food the party had brought with them was soon eaten up, and thereafter they had to depend upon fish, fruit and game. One night, when the Condor-heads had gone into camp at some distance, the canoeists were making a landing, when a native suddenly emerged from the bushes directly before them.

CHAPTER XI.—The Escaped Captive.

Calka instantly recognized the native. The monkey-hunter cried out to him in his own language, as the former seemed about to take to flight. Immediately the native halted. Calka leaped ashore and he and the strange native held

a short conversation. Then Calka came to the canoes, accompanied by the other.

"Who is he? What have you learned?" asked the gaucho of the monkey-hunter.

"The native has just escaped from the Condor-heads. He was a captive with them at the same time as myself," replied the monkey-hunter.

"Ah! Then you knew him as soon as you saw him? I thought so. What news, if any, did the native communicate?"

"He said the Condor-heads' language was almost unintelligible to him, though some of their words are to be found in his own language. He managed to make out from what the strange Indians said in their conversations among themselves that they were gradually approaching their home."

"Have you heard the Condor-heads speak of any white captives whom they have in their land?"

"I have," was the reply to the interrogatory translated by the monkey-hunter.

"What did the Indos mysterios say of their white captive?"

The gaucho put the question eagerly. He was thinking of his beloved brother, Mijar, the guide of Walter Kenmore, the captive of the Condor-heads. The mysterious Indians said there was a white man in the land of the Condor-heads who would wield great power among them soon, though he was a captive."

Nothing further of importance could be learned from the native. The latter soon departed. He declared he could make his way alone down the Amazon to his native village, which the Condor-heads had recently raided. When the gaucho immediately made known to all the boy canoeists the news he had obtained from the escaped prisoner the lads were ready to shout for joy. They now had the assurance that Walter Kenmore, the lost canoeist, and Mijar, his faithful guide, were still alive. And that assurance rendered the brave boys more than ever determined to rescue the captives of the Condor-heads. But the further information they had gained regarding Walter Kenmore occasioned much speculation and discussion among the canoeists. They wondered what the circumstances were that could have made Walter Kenmore a power in the land of the Condor-heads. Frank Woodward said shrewdly:

"I suppose human nature is much the same among these mysterious Indians as it is among other people. No doubt Walter must have become a personage of importance among the Condor-heads, or the caciques would not have cause for jealousy against him."

"No doubt of that," rejoined the gaucho. "I am sure we shall be surprised at the state of things in the land of the Condor-heads, if we ever reach it."

But we need not pause to record all the conversation of the party, for exciting events are urging us on their narration. The journey was resumed on the main channel of the river the following day. The country was wild and strange, and Ricardo declared they were now where no man he had ever met had penetrated. Three days later the Condor-heads took a plunge into the unknown by entering one of the tributaries of the Amazon.

"Mijar has told me of the legend which he had from an old chief of the pampas, and which he

firmly believes, that there is a waterway clear to the Pacific. Who knows but the Condor-heads will lead us to the heart of the great mountain?" said Ricardo.

The trail of the Indos mysterios now led into the heart of a strange land of wonders. At length the Condor-heads left the water and set out to follow a canoe path. The country was full of strangely colored rocks, of seemingly volcanic origin. Between the ridges grew vast tracts of the dreaded pampas thistle. For miles the American boy canoeists, guided by Ricardo and Calka, followed the canoe path through the thistle forest. All at once, when the terrible thicket seemed to extend all about them for many miles, Ricardo heard a cry from Tom, who was in the rear. The gaucho and the others turned instantly. Then they saw to their alarm and amazement that the pathway behind them was full of dark human forms. The next moment a yell emanated from the thicket ahead, and a second band of men emerged in the pathway directly before the canoeists.

CHAPTER XII.—Through the Death Gauntlet.

A glance at the two bands of men enabled the friends of Walter Kenmore to note among them several condor-skull helmets. Then they knew that the enemy they supposed they had some time—since the flood on the Amazon—tracked so secretly were aware of their presence, and had evidently set a trap for them. The canoeists could not retreat or advance along the narrow way between the lines of the terrible thistle growth, unless, indeed, they fought their way through the lines of the enemy. The force of the Condor-heads in front and in the rear outnumbered the canoeists' party ten to one. A battle with any prospect of victory for them was assuredly not to be thought of by the rescuers. For a moment as the fact that they were, as it appeared, almost hopelessly in the toils of the foe dawned upon them, the boy canoeists and the gaucho looked into each other's face blankly.

But Calka, the monkey hunter, instantly disappeared. No one of the imperiled party noted what became of him, only, as they glanced about the moment succeeding the discovery of the peril that had so suddenly come upon them, they saw he was gone.

"We must risk the thistle thicket. It is our only chance. I prefer that slender possibility of escape to the certainty of capture by the Condor-heads," cried the gaucho.

"Yes, yes. Anything rather than captivity among those mysterious Indians," said Jack Moreland.

The Condor-heads, seeing themselves discovered, were now advancing from the front and rear toward the canoeists. Some hours previously scouts had discovered the canoe party, and the cunning savages had set the ambush in the thistle path to take the canoeists by surprise. Evidently the strange wild men of Arizona did not deem it probable that the canoeists would take to the terrible thicket to elude them. But almost immediately Ricardo cautiously led the way among the dangerous needle-pointed spines. The gaucho was

closely followed by the young New Yorkers, and all had disappeared some moments before the two bands of Condor-heads met in the narrow pathway where the canoeists had vanished. Ricardo anticipated pursuit, and he said to his boy comrades, as they picked their way among the thick and cruel spines, not without many a smarting cut:

"The darkness is not far off. I count upon the coming of the night to prevent the pursuit. I do not think the enemy will follow us in the darkness far. I have told you that all the natives of South America dread these thistle-thickets, and avoid them as far as possible."

"We shall lose our way! We shall die in this terrible thicket if we wander far," said Tom, hopelessly.

"The gaucho will not lose his way. The sun will be his guide by day, and when the night comes the moon and stars will serve him as well," answered Ricardo, in positive tones.

The fugitives had not deserted all their canoes; on the contrary, Jack Moreland and Frank Woodward had dragged their light Rob Roys into the thicket with them. Even without the canoes to burden them their progress must have been slow. But encumbered with the two canoes they moved at little better than a snail's pace. When about a quarter of a mile from the path the thistles became very dense. Hearing distant sounds of pursuit and finding the way becoming more and more difficult, the canoeists were almost ready to give up in despair, when an exclamation of satisfaction from Ricardo, who was in the lead, suddenly caused them all to pause. Then, as they heard the voice of the gaucho again the boys came to his side. They found him standing in a narrow path which ran at right angles to the way in which they were going. So narrow was the path that they could scarcely proceed along it, in single file, without brushing against the thicket on either side. Ricardo immediately said:

"This is a jaguar path. It has been made by our South American tigers as they go to and from some drinking place or spring on the edge of the thicket."

He went along it. The large canoe had been left in the main path. Seeing Jack lugging his canoe, without a word the generous gaucho seized it, and having swung it upon his back, marched on as if the weight of a canoe did not trouble him in the least. The three boys all laid hold of the drag-rope of the other canoe, and their united strength rendered it not a difficult task for them to pull it along.

The gaucho went along the tiger trail. The boys kept at his heels. Meantime, certain sounds that reached them seemed to convey the welcome assurance that the enemy was straying from the proper route of pursuit in the dense thicket. On and on went the man of the pampas and the boy canoeists, until the way grew more open, and a rock-strewn country was seen ahead. Here and there were clumps of trees, and at some distance a range of low hills could be discerned to the westward. Night's shadows had almost completely fallen, when, thanks to the tiger path upon which they had stumbled so opportunely, the party found themselves clear of the thicket.

"At last, thank God!" cried Jack, fervently, as the last of the thicket was passed. His words

were echoed by the others most fervently, and they halted to rest just at the edge of the thicket. Some moments elapsed, during which they listened suspensefully. But no sounds of their pursuers reached them from the deadly labyrinth through which they had miraculously made their way in safety. They moved on to a clump of trees, and while they rested there the moon came out, flooding the rugged landscape with its mellow silvery light. The night wind came from the pathway they had left, and presently it wafted to their ears the sounds of fierce growls and snarls.

"A tiger!" uttered the gaucho. "But fortunately we are to the windward of the beast, and if we do not show ourselves he will not discover us."

A moment and four full-grown male jaguars were discovered going along the path leading into the thistle-thicket. The four monsters of the Amazon jungles passed close by the concealed canoeists without seeing them. When the tigers had passed the party held a consultation. The gaucho proposed that they go on to the adjacent hills and seek to see what lay beyond. This was done. Having climbed the hills, they saw a beautiful country, and just at the foot of the range they beheld a considerable river.

The water course seemed to run in the direction of the Andes—the course that had thus far been the route of the Condor-heads. A moment later a well-defined canoe path was discovered leading down the hills to the river, and after examining it a moment, the gaucho said:

"I'll wager, senors, this is the very path we were following the Condor-heads through the thistle thicket on, when we were surprised."

As the boys expressed their coincidence in the opinion, a surprising phenomenon transpired. Far away, in the direction of the Andes, a brilliant light flashed three times. This signal was thrice repeated, and in a moment more, Tom announced another thrilling discovery.

CHAPTER XIII.—Again Afloat.

Tom had glanced backwards from the hill-top, just as the last of the signal flashes, discovered far away to the westward, faded away. The lad's glances had sought the path he and his comrades had just traversed. The view he commanded from the elevation was extensive, and he saw a line of dark forms far away in the direction of the thistle-thicket. The party was advancing, and it seemed to the young canoeist that they were coming along the canoe path, where it probably emerged from the thicket. Tom pointed in the direction of the thicket as he called the attention of his companions to his discovery.

"Look yonder. That long column of moving forms is the band of Condor-heads and their captives, I'll warrant," he cried.

Glancing back all saw the marching men in the rear, and the gaucho said quickly:

"Right, senor. The Condor-heads are on the canoe path we struck a short distance back. They are making for the river at the foot of the hill. It is a branch of the Amazon. They will take to it presently, and it will lead them again to the great river. The route they have taken across country, by the way of the canoe-path, has en-

abled them to cut off a great bend in the course of the Amazon."

"What about the signal lights we discovered?" inquired Frank Woodward.

"Ricardo cannot say with certainty. Possibly those lights were intended to convey some information to the Condor-heads, and it may be there is another band, away off yonder, on those western hills, on the lookout for the marauders, whom we have followed so far," replied the gaucho.

"What now?" observed Jack Moreland. "Would you advise that we turn aside, conceal ourselves and wait to again take the trail of the Condor-heads when they have passed, or go on in advance of them to the river?"

"To the river by all means," decided Ricardo, and without further delay the party set off down the hill. They soon arrived at the river-side, and the two canoes that yet remained to them were launched. But those two light Rob Roys would each carry but one person safely. Here then was a dilemma: Four passengers and conveyance for but two of them. Ricardo, however, counted upon finding a way out of the difficulty.

"Wait and we shall see if I cannot borrow a canoe or two," said he cheerfully, as he set out along the stream and entered a thicket which grew close to the water's edge.

"Here we are!" answered the guide of the Amazon, as he appeared on the water, paddling a native canoe, large enough for two, a few moments subsequently.

"I thought I should find a canoe hidden here. The natives usually keep canoes concealed at the places where the canoe-paths reach water, so that in case of accident to the craft they have with them their journey may not be delayed," was Ricardo's explanatory remark, as he sent the canoe he had borrowed inshore, and bade Tom leap aboard.

Frank and Jack entered the other two canoes, and once more the party was all afloat. The gaucho had sighted a small, wooded island at a short distance up the stream, and the party paddled for it. Reaching the island they made a landing, and concealing their canoes, crept into a leafy cover from which they could watch the river. The night had fallen, and when the moon and stars began to illuminate the gloom, the band of Condor-heads were seen entering their canoes with their prisoners, at the place where the path reached the water-course. The mysterious Indians paddled up the stream, and the concealed canoeists on the island saw them all pass their hiding place. When the Indians of the unknown race had paddled out of sight, around a bend in the river, the canoeists again embarked, and once more set out upon their long and perilous trail.

"I wonder what has become of Calka, the monkey-hunter? I fear the poor fellow—who must have slipped away into the thistle thicket—lost his way there," remarked Tom to the gaucho, as they led the way up the river in their large canoe.

"Yes, I fear that is so. Poor fellow. He was devoted to me, and he considered that he owed me a great debt of gratitude, for I once saved his life in Para, when he was set upon by a band of midnight robbers, who meant to steal the money he had received from the sale of his monkeys," answered Ricardo.

It was almost morning when, as the three ca-

noes of the rescue party were being paddled along abreast, the wind which had been steadily increasing burst into a gale. But the stanch canoes were only carried more swiftly against the current upstream. Without noteworthy incident the canoeists continued on the stream in the rear of the Condor-heads until the evening of the following day. Then the channel they were paddling on entered the Amazon. The great river was followed for some distance, and when it entered a hilly country the canoe trailers again saw signal lights. When those lights were discovered the Condor-heads were at some distance and out of sight of the canoeists from America. But shouts of gladness were heard from the mysterious Indians, and presently answering signals were flashed by them from the elevated river-bank. The canoeists saw the Indian signal-makers, and they were interested to see that the brilliant flashes of light were made by uncovering fiercely-burning fires of resinous wood before great metallic reflectors of burnished metal, which the mysterious men of the Amazon carried with them. Ricardo explained that among the Indians of South America fire signals took the place of the telegraph among civilized people, and he said in this way intelligence was communicated from signal fire to signal fire hundreds of miles in a short time. While the gaucho expressed the opinion that the mysterious Indians had probably concluded that he and his comrades were hopelessly lost in the thistle-thicket, he continued to observe the greatest caution in following the water trail. The party went on and in pursuit of the Condor-heads until finally the latter again left the Amazon's main channel and paddled with the swift current down a wild, turbulent river. On this stream the skill of the boys and the gaucho to keep their craft right side up was severely taxed. Difficult rapids had to be passed, and dangerous rocks lay concealed under the rushing waters, ready to crush the canoes, if hurled against them.

One night, the second after entering the swift, dangerous stream, as the canoe trailers were following the Condor-heads, who were making a night journey, they came into the swiftest current they had yet encountered. Frank and Jack, in their two light Rob Roys, were carried forward at lightning speed, despite all their efforts to check the flight on the rushing current. Almost immediately the frightful roar of waters sounded in the ears of the two boys canoeists, and the voice of Ricardo, the gaucho, rang out from the rear:

"Back water for your lives! There is a tremendous falls ahead!"

Desperately Frank and Jack battled with the on-rushing tide that seemed bearing them to their doom, while the noise of the falls swelled into the deafening roar of a Niagara.

Their exertions enabled them to reach the shore just before the brink of the falls. Ricardo and Tom had landed before them. Great was the joy of the four when they realized they had escaped death in the falls. They now carried their canoes to the stream below the falls and embarked on their journey.

Soon they were going through a valley dotted with villages. Jack now produced his field glass and, looking at the people of the settlement, exclaimed:

"I see the Condor-skull helmets of the Indos mysterios! We have reached the end of our journey, I think."

CHAPTER XIV.—The Gaucho Brothers Meet And Are Surprised.

A further inspection convinced the canoeists that it was indeed as Jack said.

"Now that we have arrived at this end of our journey, how are we to proceed to accomplish our purpose? How are we to effect the rescue of Walter Kenmore and the brother of Ricardo?" asked Tom Blake.

Just then, from the town of the Condor-heads, came the sound of shouting, and forth from great stone building in the center of the village came a great throng of the strange people. The men were clothed in a short kilt, and they wore sandals on their feet. The women wore white tunics bound at the waists with colored scarfs. The multitude shouted until a long file of caciques, or chiefs, whose helmets of condor skulls showed their rank, came out of the temple, if such indeed it was. The populace then fell back, and the caciques ranged themselves in a double file, with a space of twenty feet or more between them, extending from the great arched door. Then came a hush until the tattoo of a rude drum was heard, whereupon a young, stately and handsome native female, clad in a purple robe, and wearing a profusion of costly gems and gold ornaments, including a wreath of gold leaves on her brow, came forth from the temple, leaning upon the arm of a white man, clad like a native, and wearing the condor skull helmet of a chief.

Jack had the field glass at his eyes then, and he saw that the white man was Walter Kenmore, and he so announced to his companions. Behind the captive canoeists and the native female, who was evidently a personage of high rank and authority, marched a tall, splendidly-formed, dark-faced man carrying a long spear. The latter was clad in the garb of a native, but at the sight of him the keen-eyed gaucho cried out in low tones:

"My brother, Mijar."

The man of the pampas was not the last person to emerge from the great stone building. After him came a score of black-robed men, marching solemnly in pairs. The populace greeted the appearance of the richly-attired female and her escort with cheers, and the double line of caciques grounded their spears and bowed low as the latter passed between them. The line of march was toward a large, wooden structure with a thatched roof. In it the female and her attendant, the young American canoeist, disappeared, followed by the faithful Mijar. Then the populace, the caciques and the black-robed men dispersed, and the ceremonial, for such it evidently was, concluded. The three boy canoeists and Ricardo the gaucho were at a loss to determine what it all meant. But presently the latter remarked:

"I have thought of a way to inform my brother that I am near; when night comes I will utter the signal call of the pampas rovers, at the edge of the village, and Mijar will know what it means, and hasten to join me if he can."

The canoeists then crept away to the water course, and lay in concealment until darkness came

again. At last Ricardo crept away, telling the lads he was about to stealthily approach the village and utter the signal call of the gaucho. Ricardo also instructed the young Americans to remain in hiding where they were until he returned, stating further that he would be with them again in one hour's time, unless he was taken captive or slain by the Condor-heads. Proceeding stealthily, the daring man of the pampas crept forward under cover of the darkness, after he left the boys. On the way to the village good fortune attended the footsteps of the gaucho, for he encountered no one. Arriving at a grove which stood at no great distance from the first group of native dwellings, the man of the pampas halted, and after assuring himself that he was alone in the cover, uttered a peculiar call. It was an imitation of the call of a wild bird of the plains of South America. The gaucho uttered the cry three times, and then silently awaited the result. Some moments elapsed, and he repeated it. Again the result was disappointing. There was no response. Several times more, and with a like disheartening result Ricardo gave the signal call. Finally, however, just as the gaucho began to despair of attracting the attention of his brother by means of the signal of the pampas, he heard an answer to the call, and his faithful heart gave a great bound of joy. Fifteen minutes more had not elapsed when Ricardo detected the approach of some one who came stealing along through the shadows with cat-like tread.

The stealthy man was Mijar, and when he became certain of his identity Ricardo sprang to meet him. The brothers embraced after the manner of the pampas dwellers, and then mutual explanations were made between them. Ricardo told his brother all about the three brave young Americans who had come to South America to rescue Walter Kenmore. Mijar then said:

"The young American senor, whom I love almost as a brother, found favor with the young queen almost as soon as he was brought before her a captive by the warriors who raided the mission village, where we were made prisoners. In truth, the queen of the Condor-heads fell in love with the handsome young white senor at first sight. She chose him for her husband, and he was given to understand that if he refused the honor he would be put to death. On the contrary, if he became the husband of the queen, she would make him the head cacique of all her dusky warriors. Of the two evils, Walter Kenmore chose the less. He decided to marry the queen, if he must, but hoping that before the time for the ceremony came we might escape, he stipulated that the engagement might last some time. The queen agreed to this, but to-day the fact of the betrothal was made public, and the ceremony of the same was enacted in the great stone temple in presence of the black-robed priests and all the leading caciques. According to the customs of the Condor-heads, who are really descendants of the ancient Incas who fled to the valley when the caciques and black-robes—priests—are opposed to the king or queen always takes place ten days before the marriage is to occur. Therefore in ten days Walter Kenmore will become the husband of the queen unless he escapes. Many of the caiques and black-robes—priests—are opposed to the union, and jealous of the power and the honor which the

young queen means to confer upon the white captive, and I suspect they are conspiring to murder him before the day set for the union of the couple."

Mijar paused and suddenly drew his brother down into some bushes. The next moment two native warriors stole into the grove and began looking about, as if in search of some one. Almost immediately the gaucho brothers were discovered.

CHAPTER XV.—The Plan to Rescue Walter Kenmore.

One of the Condor-heads had peered into the thicket, where Ricardo and his brother had concealed themselves. As he saw the two brave, devoted men of the pampas, the native opened his mouth to utter a shout of alarm. Ricardo clubbed his rifle and brought it down upon the head of the spy. The blow was a heavy one, and the Condor-head went down all in a heap, as if stricken by a thunderbolt. He lay motionless. But the thud of the blow had been heard by the other native. He made a daring leap, right into the thicket, but before he had fairly alighted in the cover the iron hand of Mijar fastened upon his throat, and he was strangled into insensibility, while he vainly struggled on the ground. The gaucho brothers were desperate. Upon the issue of immediate events, as they well knew, their lives depended. A moment after Mijar released the warrior of the mysterious race it was found that the latter was not only unconscious but dead. And the terrible blow Ricardo had dealt the other Condor-head had proved fatal. The gaucho brothers made two trips to the river, and each time they carried one of the bodies between them and cast it into the swift current, which bore it rapidly downstream. When the second body had been thus effectually disposed of, as they believed, Ricardo and Mijar rejoined the three boy canoeists.

"Gardela—such is the queen's name—knows well that many of her subjects among the caciques and black-robed priests are angry because she means to make a white man their superior in rank. But Gardela possesses a resolute character and a strong will. In defiance of the caciques and priests she will wed my comrade, the American senor. She knows his life is in peril, and fears the outbreak of rebellion," said Mijar.

"There must be no delay. The rescue of Walter must be hastened. Tell us, is he free to go about the village as he wills?" inquired Jack Moreland.

"No; Walter is watched by the queen's spies. Her love makes her guard him closely. He is not allowed to leave the village, or go far from the palace of the queen, in which he and I have been assigned quarters," replied Mijar.

"But he must join us here. The queen's spies must be thrown off the watch," cried Jack. He opened a small medicine-case, which, like a wise traveler, he had carried with him throughout the whole adventurous voyage on the Amazon.

"You must drug the queen's spies and all who watch Walter too closely. Disguise him, if you must, only get him safely out of the village. Here is a drug which, mixed with any fluid, will cause those partaking even very moderately of the same

to almost immediately fall into a sound sleep," said Jack.

"Ha!" exclaimed the gaucho. "The young senor has the wisdom of an older head. Mijar will try to drug those who spy upon Walter Kenmore. But if he succeeds in bringing his comrade out of the village, escape will still be difficult."

"On account of the determined pursuit the Condor-heads will make, eh?"

"Yes. We can never return as we have come, across the continent of South America. We must push on through the Andes, to the Pacific coast. We may, if good fortune attends us blind the trail we take. Certainly the Condor-heads will think we have gone by the way in which we have come. I believe there is a waterway to the ocean beyond the Andes. If not, a legend in which I have the utmost faith is false."

"Bravo! Your plan is an excellent one. To the Andes by all means. But stay. Where shall we come out if we cross this lofty range?"

"We are now in the southwestern part of Ecuador, I think."

"Ah, then we may hope to reach the old seaport city of Guayaquil, if we are not overtaken by our enemies."

"Yes."

"Well, we will attempt to reach Guayaquil. You must try to get Walter out of the Condor-head town this very night. Tell him our plans, and rely on his courage to second all you would do."

"He is a brave man, ah! and a noble one," replied the gaucho. "Now I will go. Watch and wait for my return with my comrade here. The signal of my approach shall be the call of the pampas men, which my brother has already employed this night to good purpose."

In a moment the brave pampas man was gone. Without meeting any one, he re-entered the town of the Condor-heads, and proceeded at once to the palace of the young queen, which was the large structure which he saw her enter with the white fiance after the ceremony at the temple. Mijar proceeded at once to the quarters occupied by Walter Kenmore and himself in a wing of the royal abode. There he found Walter pacing up and down in the moonlight which streamed in through a cosement, over which a matting screen that could be lowered if desired hung suspended. He immediately told him all that transpired, and what the plans of the rescuers were.

CHAPTER XVI.—Walter and the Assassins of the Cacique.

For a moment Walter Kenmore turned away to hide the emotion which the good news the devoted gaucho had brought occasioned him. The canoeist gained the mastery of himself almost immediately, however, and he said to his comrade:

"Brave hearts. True friends. A better trio for the perilous task they have undertaken could not have been found in the Junior New York Canoe Club or any other."

"No doubt. But now the plan of rescue. We are to attempt to leave the palace and the town this night."

"But the queen's spies—the vigilant men who watch me day and night, and whom Gardela has

declared she will have put to death if they allow me to leave the town," said Walter.

"I am to drug the spies."

Then he went on to explain the whole plan to attempt an escape from the country of the Condor-heads by crossing the Andes and making for the seaboard.

"First you must be disguised. You must pass through the village unquestioned, unchallenged, if we elude the queen's spies who lurk outside. You already wear the costume of a cacique. All you need is to color your skin and keep up a brave front. Fortunately I know how to color your skin. I shall use the juice of the palm, which the natives employ in coloring garments and skins of animals. There is a pot at hand in the wash-room of the palace. I will bring it at once."

"Do so by all means," assented Walter, and Mijar glided away. In a few moments he returned, carrying a large pot in his hands, which he placed on the floor, saying triumphantly:

"I have it! Now to stain your white skin."

Using a great soft flesh brush of native make which he had found in the lavatory of the palace, Mijar proceeded to apply the coloring matter in the pot to all the exposed parts of Walter's body. When it was done the gaucho surveyed his comrade with satisfaction, and declared that he would readily pass a casual observer as a native chief. Then he added:

"Now remain here until I come to the window. I go to try to drug the queen's spies."

"May success attend you," Walter rejoined, and in a moment he was alone. But very soon he heard the voice of Mijar in the grounds of the palace. Some moments elapsed, and Walter heard the voices of the queen's spies, mingled with the tones of the gaucho. Finally these sounds seemed to recede, until they finally ceased entirely. Then the captive canoeist decided that probably the gaucho for some purpose of his own, relating to the plot to escape, had led the spies away from the palace. Some time went by—perhaps half an hour had elapsed—when Walter heard stealthy footsteps at the door. Who could be stealing to his quarters at that hour? The canoeist asked himself this question, and then the recollection of the fact, well known to him, that his life was in danger, because of the hatred of the caciques and black-robed priests, came to his mind. Instantly Walter thought that secret assassins, who were determined the queen should not become his bride, were stealing near. The young American still carried a pair of revolvers, which he had worn when he was captured and which the queen had recently restored to him. But he did not draw those weapons. Instead he picked up a native's spear, which, with a huge battle-axe, stood in one corner of the room. Scarcely a moment elapsed when the door was stealthily opened, and two powerful native warriors, armed with long knives, with strangely curved blades, glided into the room. Instantly they discovered Walter, as he stood with his battle-axe in his right hand, and the great spear in his left. Silently the two warriors came at Walter, and then he recognized them as the favorite soldiers of a cacique, who had aspired himself to wed the queen, and who was, therefore, the most jealous foe the young American had among all the strange people. Almost immediately a desperate, unequal battle began in the

darkened room between the brave young American and the two assassins of the cacique. Walter took a corner, so that his two foes could not attack him in the rear, and wielded his battle-axe, while he used the spear to ward off blows aimed at his head. All at once the long blade of one of the assassins' knives flashed inside the guard the young American sought to make with the axe and the spear. The blade was aimed at Walter's head. But with a desperate effort he turned it aside upon the handle of his battle-axe, but not until the point had inflicted a slight wound on his breast directly over his heart. The blood trickled from the wound, and, as though the sight of it awakened the savage ferocity of the assassins, they both immediately attacked Walter with increased fury. Madly they slashed at him with their murderous blades.

CHAPTER XVII.—Walter and the Queen Face to Face.

The young American canoeist began to realize at once that he must use his revolver to shoot down the assassins, or they would, in the end, surely murder him in cold blood. All at once, behind the backs of the enemy, he saw the matting curtain on the window move. In an instant it was cast noiselessly aside and Mijar vaulted into the room. As he alighted on the floor of the apartment, the assassins heard him, and they wheeled like a flash.

The gaucho carried a long spear. With one tremendous thrust he sent the weapon through the heart of the foremost of the assassins. The rascal fell. At the same time Walter succeeded in bringing his battle-axe down upon the skull of the other Condor-head. Mijar leaped over the dead assassin and caught the hand of Walter.

"Just in time, my brave friend!" said Walter. Then he told how the assassins had stolen into his quarters and fallen upon him, and why he had not used his firearms.

"What success?" questioned Walter, when he had concluded his narrative.

"The best?" responded Mijar. "I decoyed them to the rear of the palace, and induced them to help themselves to a flask in the queen's cellar. Slyly I emptied the contents of the bottle I had from your friend into the flask."

"Well done."

Mijar led the way from the apartment as he spoke. Along a passage the two escaping ones went. Both were familiar with the interior of the palace. They made progress swiftly in the direction of the door by which they meant to escape. The palace was silent; the hour was now late, and all the inmates of the queen's abode seemed to have retired for the night. The young American and the man of the pampas had reached the passage, at the end of which was the small door when suddenly a side door opened. Immediately, before they could retreat, the light of a native oil lamp was flashed into the passage, and the next moment a handsome young native woman clad in a long white robe and carrying a lamp in her hand stepped into the passage directly before the escaping ones.

"Gardela, the queen!" involuntarily exclaimed

the young American. He recognized the woman who had compelled him, under threat of death, to plight his troth with her. For a moment the queen stared in alarm and surprise at Walter and his companion.

"What means this? Where would the white man and his slave go thus slyly at dead of night? Oh, can it be the white man is seeking to run away? Yes, yes, it is so; and yet Gardela would make him the greatest chief of all her warriors, and would make him her lord."

Before the young American could reply, the queen turned and seemed about to utter a cry of alarm. Walter and Mijar knew if she did so her maids and the guards of the royal sleeping chamber would at once hasten to the passage. If the queen gave the alarm they were lost.

The gaucho was equal to the emergency. Suddenly he darted forward and seized the queen. His hand was clasped firmly over her mouth, and he hissed fiercely:

"The American will leave the Condor-heads and Mijar will go with him. Silence, or I will kill you!"

The queen was like a child in the clutches of Mijar, and her utterances were stifled. Assisted by Walter, Mijar bound her hand and foot, and gagged her so that she could not utter a sound. They then took her to the room they had vacated. There the escaping ones left the fair ruler of the mysterious Indians. But before he withdrew Walter said to her kindly:

"I thank you for sparing my life and for all the favors you have shown me. I appreciate the honor you meant to confer upon me, but it cannot be, for my heart is given to one of my own race. Farewell, Gardela, farewell forever."

Walter heard a half-stifled sob uttered by the queen as he left her, and he knew that the fair ruler of the Condor-heads was really sincere in her regard for him. Meanwhile, at a certain point beyond the grounds inclosed about two sides of the queen's palace, the cacique who had, as Walter conjectured, sent the assassins to murder him, was with several of his warriors, awaiting the return of his two emissaries of death. After leaving the queen in Walter's quarters, the young canoeist and the gaucho made all haste to get out of the palace. They reached the little secret door at the end of the passage in which the queen had so inopportunately confronted them, and passed through it. Then they proceeded rapidly. But the cacique and his men on the watch saw them. At first the lurking Condor-heads took Walter and gaucho for the two assassins. But a moment later they saw they had made a mistake. Walter and Mijar had turned the corner of the inclosure about the palace, and were about to shape their course toward the river, when all at once the jealous cacique and his comrades threw themselves before the escaping men.

CHAPTER XVIII.—The Siege of the Armory.

For Walter Kenmore and the devoted gaucho the situation was one of the most intense and thrilling peril. The latter was almost immediately recognized by the cacique. The latter shouted in the native language:

"The slave of the white face, who has bewitched our queen!"

"Death rather than captivity," shouted Walter. As he uttered the heroic words he laid about him lustily. They were almost overwhelmed, however, by the force of numbers, and it seemed they were to be recaptured then and there, when all at once, now that the general alarm had been sounded, Walter drew the revolvers he had held in reserve.

Bang! bang! bang! The detonation of the young American's firearms, as he sent a volley of bullets hurtling from them into the ranks of the enemy, rang out, above the shouts and yells of the combatants. There were no firearms among the Condor-heads, and the mysterious Indians had always shown a superstitious fear of them since Walter, during his captivity, had shown them the wonderful death-dealing power the weapons possessed. The natives fell back before the volley from Walter's weapons.

"Now for a dash. We will make for the slave-pen. I have an idea. We may yet make our capture cost the enemy dear," said Mijar.

Running swiftly, the pair gained a stockade in which the large party of captives, brought in by the band of Condor-heads who had been tracked by the three boy canoeists, were confined. The slave-pen was in the rear of a large, low building, which the gaucho said was the armory of the natives. In it the spears, knives, battle-axes, and other weapons of the Condor-heads, including war bows and arrows, were kept. The door of the slave pen was secured on the outside, and quickly opening it Mijar sprang inside; Walter unhesitatingly followed. The escaping men saw about forty adult male natives of the lower Amazon in the stockade, and Mijar made haste to address them in their native language, saying:

"If you would escape, we are here to help you. We are prisoners seeking to get free. Follow me, and I will lead you to the armory of the Condor-heads, where you can arm yourselves and battle for freedom."

A shout of joy went up from the poor captives, and they followed Mijar and Walter, as the latter at once rushed out of the slave-pen. The door of the armory was quickly reached. It was secured, but the united efforts of many men, who employed a log which they found near by as a battering-ram, enabled them to force the door. Then into the building they thronged. Each man chose the weapon that suited him best. But meantime the organized warriors of the Condor-heads were assembling and hurrying in the direction of the armory. The enemy came in overwhelming numbers, and suddenly, as the captives were about to leave the armory, Walter and Mijar placed themselves in the door.

"Hold!" cried the gaucho. "We shall be overwhelmed and slaughtered without mercy before we can get clear of the village if we go now. Let us remain within it and defend it to the last."

Yells of approval went up from the captives who had become the allies of the white man and the gaucho. A barricade of heavy timbers torn from the floor of the armory was erected across the door. At the several small windows the defenders of the building stationed themselves. As the Condor-heads came on to the charge the defenders of the armory opened fire upon them fur-

ously. The bullets from the revolvers of Walter and the gaucho did fatal execution, and the arrows discharged by the captives dropped many a Condor-head.

Meanwhile Gardela, the queen, had been discovered a captive in the apartment occupied by Walter at the royal palace. The queen was promptly liberated, and when the conflict at the armory had continued for some time she appeared at the front of her warriors. In her hand the queen carried a white flag—the insignia of peace the world over. As she waved the white flag her warriors ceased firing, and she advanced. Mijar ordered the captives in the armory not to fire upon the queen. His order was obeyed. In a moment the conflict which had just been raging so furiously ceased. The queen advanced fearlessly until she was near enough to the walls of the armory to make her words distinctly heard. Then she said:

"If the white man and the gaucho will be given up to me I will set all the captives free, and pledge my word they shall return in safety to their homes."

A chorus of defiant yells announced to the queen of the Condor-heads that her attempt to corrupt the native had completely failed.

Then she turned her back upon the armory and marched slowly, and with stately mien, back to the lines of her dusky warriors. A moment and the entire host of the Condor-heads, urged on by the queen and her leading caciques, came on in a determined charge at the armory. The fierce, determined onset of the enemy was bravely met by the defenders of the building. Again the Condor-heads were compelled to retreat before the volley of their sheltered foe. As they fell back the gaucho suddenly heard a sound from the distance that seemed to thrill him to the heart. He started and listened.

"What is it?" Walter inquired, observing the agitation Mijar evinced.

"A signal call of the pampas men."

"Ha! Then it was uttered by your brother?"

"Yes. It was the voice of my brave Ricardo."

At that moment the strange, peculiar cry was again heard by the gaucho. This time Walter also heard it.

"Can it be! Can it be!" cried Mijar. "Surely, that signal call is the old signal used by the wild rovers of the pampas to assure each other that in time of trouble help is near."

Once more the signal of the pampas rovers was heard. The shout was more distinct than previously, and springing to a window, the gaucho sent up an answering cry, to tell his brother that his thrilling signal was heard and understood. Then ensued a period of suspense. The gaucho's signal was not again heard, and soon the battle began again. The Condor-heads surrounded the armory and attacked it on all sides. But, as before, they were compelled to retreat. But at a safe distance they drew their lines so as to environ the armory on all sides. Then a cacique announced that the building was to be besieged until starvation and thirst caused the inmates of it to surrender. The prospect looked dark indeed for the white captive and his companion. The day dawned and still nothing transpired to prove the truth of the signal of Ricardo to show that assistance was near for the besieged. Higher and higher mounted the sun in the cloudless sky.

and noon came and passed. The god of day began his triumphal march down the dome of heaven in a halo of golden glory, and the day wore until the shadows were again falling. Still the situation of the men in the armory of the Condor-heads remained unchanged. Still the enemy environed them. But, tired of a useless conflict, and apparently sure of finally taking them prisoners, the Condor-heads did not again attack the inmates of the armory during the day.

Toward nightfall the queen again came near the armory carrying the white flag. Again she had terms to offer. When she was near enough to make her voice distinctly heard by the inmates of the armory, she said:

"Gardela has thought better of what she said, and now she will promise the white man and the gaucho all shall be forgiven them if they will come forth and surrender. The queen is still willing to make the white warrior her lord, if he will pledge himself to fealty to her in the future."

"That I cannot do. While we appreciate your offer we most positively decline to accept your terms," said Walter.

The queen retired, without a word. But the expression on her face told that she had resolved upon a terrible vengeance against the white man who repulsed all her advances.

CHAPTER XIX.—Conclusion.

The night was very dark, and most favorable for an attack upon the armory by the Condor-heads. Under cover of the complete gloom it seemed that they might easily creep up to the door and effectually assault the barricade the defenders of the building had erected there. But leaving Walter Kenmore, Mijar and the natives of the lower Amazon besieged in the armory, we will return to the three boy canoeists and Ricardo. It seemed like an age to the boys and the man of the pampas after the departure of the gaucho, before any unusual sound from the village of the Condor-heads reached them. At last they heard the detonation of pistol-shots, and the shouts of the strange warriors of the valley. The friends of the imperilled men became intensely excited as the sounds of conflict in the village continued. Ricardo, however, could not remain inactive while his brother was in peril, and he glided away, telling the boys he meant to scout forward and ascertain just what was taking place in the village. The brave fellow soon reached the confines of the Condor-heads' town. There he saw the warriors of the strange people besieging the armory, and in concealment he watched the conflict, and made sure that Walter and Mijar were defending the armory with the captives of the Amazon. Returning finally to the boys, Ricardo made known to the young canoeists the situation of their friends. The three brave lads and Ricardo were almost ready to despair. They began to think that the rescue of Walter was an impossibility, when they were surprised by seeing a human form stealing toward the thicket they occupied, some time after the return of Ricardo. The gaucho uttered:

"Calka!"

He advanced to the thicket, at the edge of which the gaucho now showed himself, and added:

"When I slipped away into the terrible jungle

of thistles as the Condor-heads suddenly came in sight before and behind us, I fled until I found a puma trail. I followed it south, and it led me to the ingarape we had last paddled on. I struck south along its bank, and journeyed far, looking for a hidden canoe in vain. I thought you were lost, and I meant to return to my town on the lower Amazon. But at length I met a great war party of the Guanós—my own race. They had organized for the pursuit of the Condor-heads, who had carried so many of our people away into captivity. At last my people were roused to fury by the last raid of the Indos mysterios. They vowed to follow the Condor-heads to the unknown land. I resolved to accompany my friends. I led them back over the route I had traversed until we struck the trail of the enemy in the pathway through the thistle. Then on and on we came. But some of the band lost their heart, and were worn out with the fatigue of the journey, and at length a great camp was made, and then the band halted, while myself and two others were sent ahead to make a scout, and instructed to return and report if we discovered anything of the Condor-heads."

Just as Calka concluded, two more men were seen on the river-bank. The monkey-hunter said they were his comrades. At a signal they came up to where Calka and the others were. Then Ricardo and the boy canoeists hastened to tell the natives of the situation of the captives in the village of the Condor-heads, and at once the two scouts, who had been Calka's comrades, set off to rejoin the war party from the lower Amazon and bring them up.

Led by Ricardo and the three boy canoeists, the army of natives advanced stealthily in the direction of the armory. Suddenly they fell upon the Condor-heads encamped about the building. The attack was a complete surprise. Supposing themselves attacked by a great army, no doubt, the Condor-heads fell back for a moment. Then the rescuers liberated the women and children. Before the Condor-heads recovered from the surprise which this—the first attack a foe had ever made upon their village—caused them, the rescuers had retreated to the river.

They were not pursued, and they supposed that the Condor-heads, who no doubt followed the natives, did not know that they had separated from the latter. In due time, and after encountering many perils on the way, the party reached the seaport of Guyaquil, where they secured passage on a Brazilian trading vessel to Para. The voyage was made in safety, and upon their arrival in the ancient city, what was their joy to learn that the political party to which Senor Avilleos, the innocent prisoner who had depended upon Walter Kenmore's evidence to save him, belonged, had gained the ascendancy and set the young captive free! The latter's sister, Inez, who was Walter's fiancée, welcomed the lost canoeist as only a loving woman could, and there was great rejoicing in the magnificent old mansion of the Avilleos.

A week later Walter and Inez were married, and, accompanied by the three boy canoeists, the happy couple took passage on an American steamer for New York.

Next week's issue will contain "HAPPY JACK, THE DARING SPY."

CURRENT NEWS

A HUGE EMERALD

An uncut emerald weighing 630 carats has recently been brought to this country for dividing and cutting, as of course it would not be marketable in its present form. There are larger emeralds in existence; one in Bogota weighs 1,000 carats, and one of the Russian crown jewels, before their dispersion, weighed 6¾ ounces.

LION GNAWS THROUGH CAGE



A lion being shipped from Hutchinson, Kan., to Floyd King of Louisville, Ky., gnawed the wood away from two iron bars in his cage and roamed free in two connecting express cars as a Santa Fe passenger train sped eastward to Kansas City.

The beast was padding around among express

parcels in the cars, which were switched to the Argentine, Kan., yards, and the superintendent of the Swope Park Zoo was summoned to cage the animal.

A HOTEL FOR DOGS

Hotel proprietors are not very keen on entertaining the canine companions of their guests, and constant squabbles result when visitors attempt to smuggle in and feed their pets. Accordingly, Los Angeles is to be favored with a hotel for dogs which will cater to the "tourist trade" by offering rooms "with" or "without" bath. Probably most of the dogs, if they could speak, would engage accommodations "without" bath. The dogs will be well taken care of while their mistresses are shopping or posing under the studio lights.

 **BOYS! BOYS!** 

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CHAPTER XIV.

A Fortunate Pick-Up.

"To-morrow, but that is a slow steamer."

"But we might make Yokohama in good time for all that?"

"Perhaps," said the other, doubtfully.

Mark was in a passion, Miss Tryphena in hysterics, and Trix Renton calm and collected when an attendant stepped up and handed a dispatch to the conductor, who looked at it and said:

"It is for mademoiselle."

Trix took the brown envelope, tore it open and read on the enclosed slip so that all could hear:

"Return to Berlin. Will meet you there. Your conduct is truly scandalous. I don't know what you are thinking of. William Renton."

"I shall do nothing of the sort," said Trix, very decidedly. "I will go around the world and around the solar system to get away from Billy and Potiphar Philpot."

"That's all right, sister," laughed Mark, "but what about getting the steamer? Bill may take it into his head to come this far to take you back."

"I won't go, and besides, we are ahead of him."

At that moment a nautical-looking person stepped up and said:

"Excuse me, but I believe you have lost a steamer on account of a difference in time. Now I think I've got the fastest yacht going in these or any other waters, and as you are Americans and I am the same and I always believe in helping out home folks, the yacht is at your disposal, and if I don't catch up to this Russian or whatever she is I'm a crab. What do you say? Will you go?"

"Put it there!" said Mark, extending his hand.

The transfer to the yacht "Calypso" was made in remarkably rapid time; the yacht was already under a good head of steam and all her crew on board, and in less than a quarter of an hour after the captain had offered the use of his speedy and most beautiful craft to the world girdlers, and Mark had accepted, they were gliding out of the harbor at a rate which bade fair to lower all records in that line.

Captain Jackson said that he had seen the steamer go out and had a notion of racing with her, but that when he had seen just how slow she went he did not think it worth his while and had decided to wait for a day at least.

"There were two men who came on board at the last minute," he added, "without any baggage to

speak of and in a great hurry. Some of the officers thought there might be something wrong about them, but one of them spoke Russian and said that it was very important that they should leave at once and there was no objection made. One was stout, a little bald, well dressed and looked like an American. The other was an Irishman, sure thing, even if he did speak Russian."

"Those were Ildone and Burns!" exclaimed Dick. "There is not the least doubt about it."

Then Dick told why he was so anxious to get hold the Ildone and the yachtman replied:

"I'll help you, my boy! Are you all in this business?"

"No, I am making a rapid-fire tour of the world with my aunt," said Mark, "and this young lady is dodging a fortune-hunting suitor, and——"

"And he doesn't suit her, no, doesn't suit her," interpolated Miss Tryphena. "Then there is her brother, he's a conniving rascal who wants money, as if no one didn't an——"

"And the fact is the farther away we get from the brother and the suitor and the nearer we get to Japan and then to the other side of the water the better it will be for all of us."

"Well, I can't promise to take you to Vancouver, my friend," laughed the good-natured captain, "but I will get you to Japan quicker than that tub ahead of us will, and you can probably get a cracker-jack steamer at Yokohama which will cut down your record amazingly and get you away ahead of the other fellows."

"Oh, but we don't want to lose them," said Mark. "The Irishman is keeping an eye on the other, I understand."

"Yes."

"Then you won't lose him. Trust an Irishman to carrying out a contract of that sort, my boy."

As the speedy yacht ate up mile after mile with great haste and an apparently insatiable appetite, Dick began to grow more and more cheerful and Mark more certain of beating the record as he set out to do in spite of the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that had arisen.

"Let your brother come on," he said to Trix. "He won't find us. Fact is, he could not get over soon enough, but then Potiphar might rush ahead and try to persuade you, but now he has no chance."

The steamer had an hour and more the start of them, but in the course of three hours when they were enjoying tea in the cabin, the boatswain came in and reported:

"Steamer's smoke ahead of us, pretty well down, but I reckon she's the one we saw go out."

"Keep her a-going, Pankinson," said the captain, "and report when you can see her funnels. Blue and white, aren't they?"

"Yes, sir, she's a Rooshian."

"Have you a wireless plant on board?" asked Dick.

"Sure, I have and everything else up to date, but you don't know that the Russian has."

"Try to pick her up."

"Oh, I'll do that in one way if not in another," said Jackson. "Tell Jimmy to set his wireless to working, Pankinson."

(To be continued.)

PLUCK AND LUCK

GOOD READING

23

NEW JERSEY ENDS RABBIT DEARTH

Because of the scarcity of game in southern New Jersey the State has imported 9,000 rabbits which will be liberated in the five lower counties of New Jersey. William Steel, game warden of Cape May county, will liberate the county's quota of 428 the coming week. The rabbits are from the Southern States and Mexico.

Forest fires in southern New Jersey have almost depleted the State of rabbits, which used to be so plentiful that farmers complained they ate hundreds of dollars' worth of vegetables every year.

There also is a move on to have a law passed at Trenton to prohibit the killing of deer for the next five years.

BRITISH CONTRACT FOR RAISING SUNKEN SHIPS AT SCAPA FLOW

A Queensborough, Kent, firm to-day made a contract with the Admiralty to raise sixty-eight German warships sunk at Scapa Flow.

Most of the warships when raised will be sold to shipbreakers, while the others will be used by the Admiralty for target practice. At the conclusion of the World War the German warships were taken to Scapa Flow, an expanse of sea in the southern part of the Orkneys, used by Admiral Jellicoe as his chief naval base, to be interned there. On June 21, 1919, the German crews scuttled the vessels, and the entire fleet, except the battleship Baden, five light cruisers and some smaller vessels settled to the bottom.

MODERN COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

A modern Count of Monte Cristo was discovered, it was believed, when Joseph Lanoville, fifty-four, a silver polish manufacturer of Coytesville, N. J., opposite Two Hundredth street, and the father of sixteen children, prepared to go to France to claim a fortune of \$75,000,000.

The story reads like fiction or a thrilling movie scenario. It is that, just before the French Revolution, Count Anthony Lanoville, a Parisian nobleman, died leaving an estate of \$10,000,000. Some years previous, his only son and heir was abducted by an American seaman and brought to Rouse's Point. There, it was declared, he married an Indian girl.

Recently, it was said, Alphonse Bertram, an attorney of Paris, came here and informed Lanoville that, inasmuch as he was the oldest surviving descendant of the kidnaped heir, he was entitled to claim the Lanoville estate in France, which meanwhile was declared to have grown to \$75,000,000.

KNOW YOUR OWN COUNTRY

North Dakota is nearly seven times as large as New Jersey, one and one-half times as large as New York State, but its population is only one-fifth that of New Jersey, one-eighteenth that of New York, although North Dakota's agricultural land can support a population of more than 10,000,000. It now is 700,000.

North Dakota produces one-eighth of the spring wheat crop of the entire United States.

North Dakota has over a half billion tons of coal underlying her soil, the greatest coal deposit of any one State.

North Dakota, though in the far north, produces the finest cantaloups, watermelons and strawberries.

North Dakota has ninety-five more hours of sunshine in five summer months than Springfield, Ill.

North Dakota produces more rye than any other two States and half the flax production of the United States.

North Dakota hopes to become one of the greatest corn producing States in spite of short seasons; production now averages 20,000,000 bushels a year.

North Dakota will become one of the leading honey producing States of the nation in the belief of agricultural leaders.

North Dakota's diversified farms include several for raising of silver foxes.

Jersey cattle imported to North Dakota grow considerably larger than in States to the south.

North Dakota is one of the most advanced States in the number of consolidated rural schools.

North Dakota hopes to see a national park created out of a great petrified forest found in the "Bad Lands" near Theodore Roosevelt's ranching home.

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INTERESTING RADIO NEWS AND HINTS

ABOUT HOWLING!

Audio frequency with two or more steps of amplification will howl sometimes. With the radio frequency there is no howling and any number of steps may be used.

GOOD TIPS

Many radio experimenters have trouble with regenerative sets. The filaments may be lit too brightly or the B batteries on the detector tube may be improperly adjusted. The B battery should be variable and by experimentation a best value will be found. When using an amplifier make sure that all the connections are tight. A loose connection will produce a disagreeable noise in the head telephones.

Shellac should never be used as a binder. It greatly increases the disturbed capacity of the coil, with resultant losses. In fact, no binder should be used. If a reasonable amount of care is exercised and the turns are wound tight a binder will be unnecessary.

In circuits in which a single turn of wire constitutes the primary inductance heavy wire should be used, preferably 12 or 14. A strip of copper ribbon, a quarter inch wide and properly insulated from the secondary, will serve.

VARIOMETER

Variometers will make radio frequency transformers if the rotor and stator windings are separated. Use one half as the primary and the other as the secondary. With a small variable condenser across the secondary the tuning will be greatly improved. This is known as tuned radio frequency amplification, and is better than using transformers, because radio frequency transformers have a decided "peak" where the signals are best, and it is not possible to change this peak except by tuning.

Radio frequency is strictly limited in its wave length and the use of the variometer as suggested above will give a little better range than the transformer.

It will be found in ordinary radio frequency transformer amplification that certain stations will come in better than others, despite the fact that the other stations may have more power. This is caused by the peak mentioned above and the variometer will enable the operator to tune in these other stations so that they are as good.

TRANSATLANTIC TRANSMISSION

Transatlantic transmission with vacuum tubes took place recently when an experimental high-power tube set at Radio Central, Rocky Point, L. I., was operated continuously for 16 hours, handling commercial traffic with Great Britain and Germany on a wave length of 19,000 meters. The set itself is for the time being composed of three 50-kilowatt, 15,000-volt, water-cooled, metal vacuum tubes, known in the engineering world as kenetrons, used as rectifiers, and six 15,000-volt, 20-kilowatt, water-cooled, metal plitons, used as high-frequency converters. For the experiment

with the tube set one of the several radially-arranged antennae, each more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and supported by six towers, was employed. A current of 350 amperes was delivered at the antenna circuit. The British Marconi Company have in their station at Carnovan, Wales, a tube set made up by parallel 60 air-cooled, fragile, glass vacuum tubes of approximately two kilowatt input capacity each. American engineers have reduced the number of tubes necessary for a set from six to sixty, by increasing their individual capacity from two kilowatts each to ten kilowatts each.

BUYING LOUD-SPEAKERS

Engineers have pointed out that the best way to select a loud-speaker is to listen for a pure sound, such as that from an organ. If this is not available, the "howl" of the radio set itself may be used to test the quality of the loud-speaker. If the loud-speaker sends out the various pitches of the howl without a rattle and at fairly even volume, it will generally give good reproduction of music or voice without much distortion. Piano music picked up by a radio set and sent through a loud-speaker also serves as a good test. If some notes are abrupt, blast through and sound "tinny," it is an indication that the loud-speaker is not of the highest quality.

The voice is complicated sound and serves as a good test for the loud-speaker's ability. Sometimes twenty to thirty pitches are necessary to produce the quality and inflection of the voice. If a person hears a familiar voice through a loud-speaker and can recognize the naturalness of the voice it is a good indication that the loud-speaker is of superior quality. If the listener is not familiar with the voice of the speaker, the best test is to stand away from the loud-speaker and try to understand the voice.

There are four tests which may be applied to a loud-speaker to determine its efficiency. Does it produce clear sound at different pitches? Is there equal loudness of sound at different pitches? In complicated sound do the individual pitches get through in the same proportion that they have in the original sound? Is the natural sound of the loud-speaker minimized as much as possible?

One can easily distinguish between a pure sound of a definite pitch, such as that of a flute or organ, and the complicated sound, such as the voice, which is the blending of a number of pitches. A loud-speaker to be perfect must be capable of reproducing all musical tones and various pitches of the voices without any of its own characteristic sounds. A loud-speaker having a horn, diaphragm or vibrating reed is sure to have its own characteristic sounds, that is, it will vibrate itself at certain frequencies and cause distorted sound. When the tin horn vibrates, the sound is said to be "tinny." The natural sound of the loud-speaker is dependent to a great extent on the horn. A long horn gives a lower and more pleasing pitch.

A poorly adjusted amplifier will make the best

loud-speaker sound bad. The most successful results are obtained by accentuating the low notes and suppressing the high ones. For this reason it is sometimes difficult to reproduce a distant station clearly through a loud-speaker. A loud-speaker cannot be used efficiently with a crystal set. At least two stages of audio frequency amplification are required for successful results. Where two or three stages of radio frequency amplification are also employed, a loud-speaker can be operated in connection with an indoor loop antenna, otherwise the outdoor antenna is necessary for good results.

TUNED RADIO FREQUENCY

The importance of adding radio frequency to a set already on hand is in general fully realized, yet there are some who are unaware of this form of signal amplification.

Radio frequency amplification has been developed to a degree of practical perfection that makes it entirely satisfactory even in the hands of the unskilled amateur. Results are being obtained in actuality that rival what super-regeneration promised to accomplish in theory.

Radio frequency amplification is becoming more and more a matter of keen interest to radio amateurs. The radio enthusiasts of pioneering nature who are always the first to try something new had found out that radio frequency amplification has profound possibilities and that it really and truly belongs in every set that lays claim to long distance reception.

In the first place the fundamental theory of radio frequency amplification is entirely different from that of audio frequency. As the names imply, both pieces of apparatus amplify the signals received, but they do it in a widely different manner. The audio frequency method, for instance, amplifies whatever the detector tube delivers to it, and therefore considerably increases the volume of sound in the telephone receivers. It is obvious that if a signal is too weak by the time it reaches the receiving antenna to affect the detector no amount of audio frequency amplification will make it heard. In other words, you cannot amplify something the detector won't detect.

Radio frequency amplification on the other hand gets right in at the heart of the trouble. The radio frequency tubes precede the detector tube in the circuit and confine their work to the radio impulses in their original form. In accordance with the natural action of the vacuum tube these impulses are successively strengthened by as many tubes as desired and then when they are deemed sufficiently strong they are passed on to the detector tube for conversion into currents of radio frequency. Once audible sounds are produced audio frequency amplification may be relied upon to obtain the desired results for volume.

The connection between the amplifying vacuum tubes may be a wire of very high resistance or it may be some form of transformer. Another method which is being found suitable is what is known as tuned radio frequency.

With the employment of radio frequency transformers they may be of air core type or the iron core construction which has two independent coils

known as primary and secondary, mounted upon laminated legs. The iron core amplifying transformers give good results and in seeming paradox also give the most trouble to the uninitiated.

The amount of iron in any transformer is dependent upon the frequency of the current which is passed through the windings, the higher the frequency the less the iron. Since the iron must reverse its polarity with each reversal of the current this indirect ratio is easily explained. With audio frequencies such as are encountered in signals after they leave the detector the design of the transformer is not difficult and many good audio frequency amplifying transformers are now on the market. But when it is remembered that the radio frequency of a 200-meter wave runs up into millions of cycles the complexity of the task confronts the designer of radio frequency amplifying transformers.

The design of radio frequency transformers would not prove a thorn in the sides of makers if the commercial phases of the question did not have to be encountered. It is not such a problem to construct a radio transformer which will function well in a very narrow band of wave lengths, say 200 to 250 meters, but such a device will not meet with the sanction of most amateurs, because they would not wish to be put to the task of constantly changing transformers. The ordinary amateur wants a radio frequency transformer that he can insert in a circuit and forget, regardless of wave length. But the art has not as yet advanced to the point where such requirements can be met.

Several schemes have been tried for circumventing the natural limitations of the radio frequency transformers. One has been the division of the windings into sections with suitable taps brought to the surface. By means of binding posts or a movable contact arm the transformer is tuned to a particular band of wave lengths that are to be received, and the loss incident to using a transformer designed for one frequency on a vastly different one is partially avoided. The other scheme provides a series of transformers to be plugged in and out in accordance with the tuning.

The most common type of radio frequency transformer on sale to-day is one that closely resembles the familiar audio frequency instrument and is designed to cover a band of wave lengths extending from about 200 to about 500 meters.

Naturally there is one point within this range where the efficiency reaches a maximum, the electrical losses increasing rapidly with the distance on either side of this point. However, most radio fans who employ radio frequency transformers are willing to lose some of this efficiency for the sake of convenience of operation and it must be considered that they are getting fair results with their ability to tune.

Tuned radio frequency does not employ any transformer whatsoever but merely a coil of wire similar to a variometer and condenser. By means of this combination in its proper place in the circuit, one may tune to any given wave length and amplify that signal on that wave length. Usually one or two stages of tuned radio frequency are employed enabling long distance reception regardless of the wave length to be received.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 13, 1924

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

HICKORY'S PECULIAR BARK

The characteristic of the shagbark hickory from which it derives its name, is the peculiar manner in which the bark is attached to the trunk. This is light gray and from one-half to three-quarters of an inch in thickness. It separates from the trunk in thick strips from a few inches in length to from two to three feet and from one to six inches in width. These strips retain their attachment to the tree at the middle and usually curl up at each end, giving a decidedly rough and shaggy appearance to the trunk.

GIANT RATS

The rat terrorism of the lower East Side, New York, showed further growth recently with three more persons reporting to Bellevue for treatment after having been bitten in their sleep.

Louis Salvatore, forty, and his twelve-year-old son, Adamo, who live in the tenement house at No. 331 East Fourteenth street, where three-year-old Adele Quattrocchi was attacked in her crib, were two of the victims. Both waked to find the lobes of their ears bleeding and to see rats jump from the bed.

The third victim was Anthony Massio, two, whose wrists were lacerated by the rodents as he lay in bed. All received lockjaw anti-toxin at Bellevue.

Meanwhile residents in nearby tenements continued to fight the pests. The rats have become so bold they swarm over the table and are prevented only by clubs from making away with food. Many of them are said to be as large as cats.

According to persons living in the tenements, the unusually large number of rats have been driven into the homes by subway excavations in Fourteenth street.

SHOES SHINED FOR ONE CENT

Most of us are familiar with the various "Penny-in-the-Slot" machines. We can now make it unnecessary, it is claimed, to spend five or

ten cents a day for a shoe shine which is not really needed except that the shoes need a dusting, and the wearer has scruples against using his handkerchief for the purpose, besides exerting what to some persons is too great a physical effort.

All one need do now is to drop a penny in an automatic shoe-brushing machine, place the foot beneath the rapidly revolving brush, and in half a minute the shoes are cleaned from mud and dust, and the original lustre of the dressed leather is restored. The brush, which revolves an ample length of time to thoroughly cleanse each shoe, is a specially made affair of the same type used at shoe factories in putting the final finish on shoes before shipment.

This machine will not shine a shoe that has nothing on it with which to work; but it will, however, keep Sunday's shine bright and clean for a surprising length of time, if used regularly.

LAUGHS

"They're six fine sons you have, Casey," said Dennis Flaherty to his friend. "They are," said Casey. "Do you have any trouble with them?" "Trouble?" said Casey. "I've never had to raise my hand to one of them, except in self-defense."

"You go hunting every year?" "Yes." "What kind of game do you prefer?" "Oh, I never shoot anything. But it's kind of pleasant to come home and have my family make a fuss over me because I got back alive."

Hiram—That boy of yours what went to college could do some powerful lifting with the club and dumbbells. Silas—Yes; but I always thought more of the other one's lifting powers. Hiram—Did he lift dumbbells and the like? Silas—No; but he lifted the mortgages.

"See here, landlord," stormed the indignant tenant, "that house you rented me is too draughty. Why, when I am sitting in the middle of the room my hair blows all over my face. What can you do to stop it?" "Well," replied the landlord thoughtfully, "how about giving you a quarter to get a haircut?"

The portly lady had accidentally taken a rear seat in a surface car reserved for smokers. With unconcealed indignation she watched the man beside her fill his pipe. "Sir," finally came her frigid tones, "smoking always makes me feel sick." "Does it now, ma'am?" said the man, as he carefully lighted up. "Then take my advice an' quit smoking."

On moving into a new neighborhood the small boy of the family was cautioned not to fight with his new acquaintances. One day Tommy came home with a black eye and badly bespattered with mud. "Why, Tommy," said his mother, "didn't I tell you not to fight until you had counted one hundred?" "Yes'm," sniffed Tommy; "and look what Willie Smith did while I was counting."

INTERESTING ARTICLES

ISLE OF PINES REPTILES

There are no venomous reptiles or insects on the Isle of Pines. There are four varieties of the smaller snakes. The most formidable reptile is the maja—a constrictor. One of the largest known specimens perhaps is the one killed near Nueva Gerona some years ago in a manger while enjoying his siesta after having dined upon a brooding hen and her eggs.

It measured twelve feet in length and was approximately six inches in diameter except through the part distended by the hen. Its skin, cured, looked like the souvenir of some heroic encounter, but the truth is that the noncombative nature of the maja is so ridiculously at variance with his dreadful aspect that his name is applied as a term of contempt to blusterers and swaggerers. Dr. Luz Hernandez in his book "The Salubrity of the Isle of Pines," recommends the white meat of the maja to his patients.

The lacertillia are represented by a few harmless lizards, a plenty of pretty chameleons and a variety of the iguanas, rarely seen, whose flesh is esteemed as a food. Specimens have been found three feet in length, but its innocuous nature is evident from the fact that it makes a very well behaved family pet.

AMERICAN QUAIL RAISED ON MOORS OF SCOTLAND

The whir of American quail will soon be a familiar sound to sportsmen in Scotland if that game bird continues to thrive as it has done on a farm at Halleaths, Lochmeden, Dumfriesshire, since last February when twenty-five brace were imported. Forty-three of the birds were liberated in March. They proved to be extremely hearty and reared two broods, numbering from ten to fifteen chicks. All are in a thriving condition.

This is the first successful attempt to acclimate American quail to the British Isles, a number of previous attempts to introduce birds from Virginia having failed. Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, attempted to stock the estates at Windsor; King Edward tried to add quail to the wild fowl of the Sandringham preserves; the late Maharajan Dhulcep Singh, Lord Walsingham and Lord Lilford also tried, but were equally unsuccessful. It remained for a Scottish commoner, John Johnstone, to succeed where others had failed. Johnstone's quail are of the species originally taken from the western states to Vancouver, British Columbia, and thence transported to Scotland.

GUARDS AT HARDING TOMB TOLD TO SHOOT MARAUDERS

Soldiers guarding the vault where the body of the late President is entombed have been given orders to shoot directly at persons who have been causing disturbances around the tomb of the late President at night, Lieutenant R. H. Harriman, in command of the soldier guard stationed at the tomb, announced recently.

Lieutenant Harriman said that ever since the

guard has been stationed at the tomb certain individuals have been annoying the detachment. At first small boys were blamed, but when the disturbances kept up the guard took it more seriously.

The disturbances have consisted of throwing stones at two small guard-houses on each side of the entrance to the vault. At various times a bugle has been blown in remote parts of the cemetery about the midnight hour and of late has happened almost nightly.

Riot guns have been sent from Fort Hayes, Columbus headquarters of the guard detachment here, and these, loaded with buckshot, will be used if the disturbances continue, Lieutenant Harriman said. No cause for the disturbances is known.

85,000 DESTROYED HOUSES REBUILT

Approximately 100,000 houses were destroyed or damaged seriously in Belgium during the war, and of these more than 85,000 have been reconstructed to date, leaving about 15,000 still to be erected or put into habitable repair, which, it is expected, will take about another twelvemonth. Such is the broad fact revealed in the latest returns issued by the Department for the Reconstruction of the Devastated Regions of Belgium.

Some 1,200 churches, schools, town halls and other public edifices were destroyed or heavily damaged in the war. A good thousand of these have been rebuilt or repaired, and, while these were being rebuilt King Albert's fund supplied 250 wooden huts to carry on the most urgent of the services formerly effected in the destroyed buildings. Schools claimed first attention, more than four hundred of these buildings being rendered available before other work was touched.

That part of Belgium which contained the actual battlefield was nothing more than a howling wilderness at the armistice. From a fertile pasture of pre-war days, the whole of the Belgian war zone had, by the close of 1918, become a shell-swept waste, with a few branchless trees, some riddled and blackened walls, exploded shelters, ugly trenches and abandoned munition dumps occupying the site of what were in pre-war days, and what are now once again, prosperous farms and comfortable homesteads. More than 200,000 acres of land have had to be overhauled and leveled up to reach this result, thousands of miles of high and by roads have had to be relaid, endless stretches of rail track and tram lines constructed, water and gas mains put in and canals, which themselves in many instances, have had to be rebudded. In a word, the very foundations of organized and civilized life have had to be relaid. How this work has been accomplished is shown by the fact that of a total population of 315,000 in the West Flanders war zone—the bulk of whom fled the country before or during the hostilities—nearly 290,000 have now returned. A year after the armistice the number of returned refugees was only 189,000.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

RUBBING NOSES

The Maori women of New Zealand know nothing about kissing. Nose rubbing is their form of salutation, and when two friends meet they hold each other by the hands, bend their heads until their noses touch, and then rub them gently from side to side. This form of greeting is not confined to the women, but is practiced by the men; they seldom meet without rubbing noses.

NEW YORK CANDY

New York consumes more and manufactures a better grade of candy than any other city in the world. Candy has come to be so generally used that it is no longer regarded as a luxury, as was the case a few decades ago, but as a food. The candy-makers of New York are among the most proficient in the country, and the work is surrounded by sanitary conditions that are regarded as the most perfect in the world. It costs New Yorkers an average of \$5 each for candy every year, which makes the annual bill for the sweets \$25,000,000.

JUDGE WANTS SALARY CUT

Judge H. C. Stratton of Chenango County, N. Y., who took office Jan. 2, feels his remuneration from various sources connected with his office is more than sufficient. Recently he wrote to State Senator Lusk and Assemblyman Lord urging the passage of legislation reducing his salary as County Judge from \$4,000 a year to \$3,500. Previously he had requested the Board of County Supervisors to take this action and his request is still under consideration.

The total salary of James P. Hill, Judge Stratton's predecessor, who was recently elected a Justice of the Supreme Court, was \$5,000, Judge Stratton said. In 1918 a special act of the Legislature increased the salary of County Judges from \$3,000 to \$4,000, and in 1920 an additional \$500 came to the Judge through the transfer tax. A children's court allowance brought the total to \$5,000, which, Judge Stratton avers, puts an unnecessary strain upon the taxpayers.

A MACHINE TO MEET THE RABBIT PLAGUE

One way to deal with rabbits, the great Australian plague, is to dig up their burrows. This, however, is largely a loss of effort, for the rabbits reopen the burrows as fast as the workers can destroy them—if not faster. Mr. E. K. Bowman, of Wargundy, has invented an interesting apparatus that attacks the problem from the other side. He fills up the holes instead of digging them out, and he does this by machine. Roughly speaking, what he has is a tractor that carries two tanks, one of earth and one of water. The earth is kept replenished by a digging element attached to the machine. The earth from the one tank and the water from the other are mixed by a revolving concrete mixer, and passed down a chute, from which the mixture is directed

into the burrows. After drying, this mixture sets like cement; and the animals make no effort to reopen the burrow.

SUNFLOWER SEED YIELD \$750,000

Sunflower seeds, 14,000,000 pounds of them, worth almost \$750,000. That is this year's crop of the three important producing States—Missouri, Illinois and California—according to the Department of Agriculture.

The yield this year is about 4,000,000 pounds more than last. From four to six million pounds are imported annually, principally from Holland, Argentina and Russia.

"The poor man's peanut" are what sunflower seeds are called in some sections. In New York City many Russians buy and roast them to eat. They are used principally, though, in poultry feed mixtures and for parrot feed.

Kansas, the "Sunflower State," produces practically no sunflower seeds for commercial use, but in the three principal producing States they are considered a profitable crop, as about 600 pounds an acre can be produced and sold for around \$4 per 100 pounds.

GLOBETROTTER SWEEPED FROM CANOE BY NILE

Details of the death by drowning in Egypt of C. R. Morrison, young Philadelphian, who was on his way round the world with Jean Meyers, were received recently from Cairo.

The young men started from Cairo on Oct. 10 in a canoe for Central Africa by way of the Nile in spite of warnings by friends that it would be practically impossible to ascend the river at that season of the year in such a tiny craft.

Meyers said they spent the first night at Maadi and started next morning for Helouan. About 11 o'clock in the morning Meyers said the canoe got into a small whirlpool which caused the small craft to heel over, throwing them into the water. Meyers said that his companion called out to him that he could swim and he told him to cling to the canoe, which had righted itself, and was being carried downstream. The canoe was only thirty feet from the shore and Meyers tried to push it in toward the bank but the current was too strong.

Meyers finally decided to swim ashore for help and told Morrison to stick to the canoe as he was being carried down the river. The canoe was found later some distance below the scene of the accident but Morrison's body was not recovered.

The young men had expected to cross through Africa from Cairo to the Cape and earn the expenses of the journey by selling postcards, bearing their pictures. The canoe was bought in Cairo with the proceeds from the sale of postcards in that city and Alexandria.

Undaunted by the death of his companion, Meyers announced his intention of making the journey alone so soon as he could get the canoe overhauled and sufficient money to buy stores and equipment in place of the goods lost in the Nile.

TAKING MES- SAGES ON THE FLY

The British Air Service in Mesopotamia has perfected a scheme for delivering written messages to planes without the necessity of their landing and stopping to pick up the documents.

A line is stretched between two poles about 6 feet high and perhaps 20 feet apart. To this line the message is tied. By spreading large pieces of cloth on the ground in a prearranged pattern the pilot of the aircraft is signaled that there is a message for him; the arrangement of the cloth indicates in what direction he must fly to cross the line between the poles at right angles. If more than one plane is up, the cloth again tells which plane is to receive the message.

The selected plane swoops low over the poles, and the pilot dangles a line to the end of which is attached a hook. This engages the line to which the message is tied, and line, message and all are dragged into the air. The pilot reels in his catch as the plane speeds away. If the message is to be delivered the plane simply dives to the point of delivery and drops the message.

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A development company, which controls what it claims is a "new entrance" to the cave had diverted considerable traffic from the original or "discovery" entrance, it was indicated.

In an announcement that the original entrance had been closed until further notice, the trustee for the estate which owns the cave alleged that to reach Mammoth Cave through what has been advertised as the "new entrance" it is necessary to pass through six connecting caves. It was indicated by the statement of the trustee that the management of the original entrance would "seek the proper remedy" and that legal action against the development company for advertising that it controlled an entrance to the famous cavern was to be taken.

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